SPECIAL ISSUE

the weekly Standard

AUGUST 25 / SEPTEMBER 1, 1997 $2.95

Is There A WORLDWIDE CONSERVATIVE CRACK-UP?

Michael Barone • Gary L. Bauer • Jeffrey Bell • Walter Berns • Malcolm Bradbury • David Brock
Eliot A. Cohen • Noemie Emery • Francis Fukuyama • David Gelernter • Stanley B. Greenberg
Yoram Hazony • Mark Helprin • Josef Joffe • Michael S. Joyce • Charles R. Kesler • Everett Carll Ladd
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This is a combined issue. The next WEEKLY STANDARD *will appear in two weeks.*

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The Audit Bureau Member

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The Speaker's New Moderate Base

Newt Gingrich decided last week to give some of the responsibilities of Bill Paxon—whom Gingrich dumped from his leadership team after the recent failed coup—to Pennsylvania's Jim Greenwood, one of the most "moderate" Republicans in the House (moderate being media code for the GOP's liberal wing). Unless Gingrich just wanted to serve up an emetic to his conservative backbenchers, it's hard to see why he picked Greenwood to lead the House GOP's long-range planning effort. Greenwood has never been known as a Gingrich loyalist. Moreover, Greenwood is so far out of the party's mainstream when it comes to abortion that he can fairly be described as holding hands with the Democrats' pro-choice hardliners.

As a House freshman in 1993, Greenwood was a cosponsor of the Freedom of Choice Act, which would have made the unrestricted right to abortion a matter of federal law. Shortly before last year's Republican convention, Greenwood held a press conference outside the Supreme Court to denounce the abortion language proposed for the GOP platform. And earlier this year, he joined liberal Democrat Nita Lowey in inviting colleagues to form a congressional pro-choice caucus. "With an anti-choice majority in Congress," they wrote, "it is critical that we work together to stem the tide of anti-choice legislation." Greenwood was one of only eight House Republicans to vote against a proposed ban on partial-birth abortions.

Greenwood has already tried to divert attention from his pro-abortion record, saying he would be unfairly labeled on the basis of one issue. So he and his conservative colleagues should find common ground on other issues? No chance. Greenwood has voted to raise the minimum wage, to maintain the ban on assault-style firearms, and to freeze defense spending. Last year, he told the *New York Times* that he and the other "moderate" members of the House GOP were "not going to be led by right-wing ideologues off of precipices that have nothing to do with where Americans want to go."

Speaking of precipices, by choosing Greenwood, Gingrich seems to be sending a signal that his political future, if he has one, will not be with the party's conservatives.

Jesse Jackson's Favor to Faircloth

Jesse Jackson sure knows how to help a guy. He traveled to North Carolina last week to protest the role of Republican senator Lauch Faircloth in lifting power from Washington mayor Marion Barry and handing it to a presidentially appointed control board. "Faircloth essentially raped the democracy and disenfranchised every [District of Columbia] voter," Jackson harrumphed. "The mayor's office has been stripped." Faircloth responded that Jackson and Barry are welcome in North Carolina, but they'd be better off cleaning up D.C. Meanwhile, Faircloth's aides dispatched a crew to videotape the demonstration. Just imagine the TV ad next fall when Faircloth runs for reelection: Jesse Jackson, on camera, declaring Faircloth "too tough on Marion Barry." Couldn't buy better publicity than that.

Those Who Live in Greenhouses . . .

Longtime *Boston Globe* editor Ross Gelbspan has been riding high since April, when Addison-Wesley published his book *The Heat Is On: The High Stakes Battle Over Earth's Threatened Climate*. Gelbspan's publisher claims that oil and coal interests have been "paying off scientists to pose as 'greenhouse skeptics,' employing political lobbyists, proliferating propaganda materials, and distorting and suppressing the mounting evidence of impending climactic [*sic*] disaster."

Who is Gelbspan to make such sweeping claims of fraud? Well, for one thing, he's a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, according to his book's dust-jacket. Leftie interest groups—Greenpeace, Fenton Communications—have been quick to cite these Pulitzer credentials in touting the book's conclusions. The *New York Times* alluded to them, too. Gelbspan's own personal bio brags that he has "won a number of awards, including a Pulitzer Prize in 1984." What did Gelbspan win his Pulitzer for?

Nothing, it turns out. Gelbspan has never been awarded a Pulitzer. He was one of the editors of a 1984 *Globe* series on race relations—for which the paper did get a Pulitzer—but Gelbspan was not one of the seven journalists the awards committee named. His claims of a Pulitzer turn out to be methane in a dangerously high concentration.

Another Greenhouse Effect

The 1997-98 Supreme Court term doesn't even begin for another two months, and already the *New York*

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Scrapbook

Times is using its news pages to instruct the justices about their most important pending case. This fall, the court will hear *Piscataway Board of Education* v. *Taxman*, the notorious affirmative-action litigation involving a high-school business-education teacher who lost her job on grounds of "diversity," solely because she is white.

This case is a no-brainer. Sharon Taxman is going to keep her job. And if the court issues its ruling on any ground of principle, workplace affirmative-action programs all over the country will be subject to reverse-discrimination claims.

Can't have that. Enter the *Times* and its Supreme Court correspondent, Linda Greenhouse. Her August 4 story is essentially a long memo to Sandra Day O'Connor, always the Supreme Court's swing vote on affirmative action. Greenhouse's sources in America's leading law schools admire O'Connor's "subtle, fine-grained position"—like that of retired justice Lewis Powell, whose convoluted opinion in the case that began the Supreme Court's reversal of affirmative action, 1978's *University of California Regents* v. *Bakke*, Greenhouse obviously admires and hopes O'Connor will emulate.

The *New York Times* is enamored of *Bakke* because the case invented the "diversity" excuse for racial preferences. Indeed, though Powell's decision allowed Allan Bakke finally to enter medical school, defenders of racial preferences have long held up one Dr. Patrick Chavis, who supposedly took Bakke's original spot, as a model of why "diversity" in university admissions is a good thing. Chavis, you see, became an ob-gyn in the poor L.A. suburb of Compton, while Bakke went off to white-bread Rochester, Minn. Sen. Edward Kennedy and Tom Hayden, among others, have been fond of making this comparison.

But as Jeff Jacoby reported in the *Boston Globe* last week, Chavis had his medical license suspended earlier this summer by the Medical Board of California. Three of his liposuction patients suffered massive bleeding after Chavis operated on them. One died. Looks like the diversity crowd will need to find a new poster boy.

Bye-bye, Bilingual

"English for the Children," the campaign to end bilingual education in California with a ballot measure, gathers steam. Fernando Vega, a Latino leader and lifelong Democrat who rallied Hispanic votes for the 1992 Clinton-Gore campaign, has agreed to join the anti-bilingual crusade as honorary chairman. Vega supported bilingual education in the past and even helped implement a program when he was on a local school board. "But now," Vega said, "after many years of trying, it is obvious that bilingual education just doesn't work, and we must end it."

The Latino leader's participation should help defuse bad-faith attacks that criticism of bilingual education amounts to "an attack on Latinos or other immigrants," says campaign director Ron Unz, a maverick Republican who distinguished himself in 1994 as an opponent of Proposition 187, the anti-illegal-immigration measure that, as Unz puts it, caused Republicans to be "perceived as anti-immigrant." Unz and the other backers of the ballot measure seem to be succeeding in making the case that their opposition to bilingual education is in fact *pro-immigrant*. English for the Children would provide waivers for the small percentage of parents who do not want their children to receive instruction in English-only classrooms. The initiative also calls for $50 million per year for 10 years to fund adult literacy programs. Unz may succeed in showing you can be pro-immigration and anti-multiculturalism at the same time and that this combination is a political winner.

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Casual

Numbers on the Brain

"The little grey cells," says Hercule Poirot, Agatha Christie's great Belgian detective, touching an index finger to his forehead, "ah, Hastings, they are what matter." Those little cells representing our brain power—who today does not worry about losing them at too rapid a clip? As early as their forties, people begin making rueful jokes about having Alzheimer's or Halfheimer's, trying to kid away quite genuine worries about memory loss.

Two possibilities here: First, many of us truly are losing our memories, or, second, we are called upon to remember more than earlier generations and therefore suffer from overload. I was thinking about this the other night when, in a fit of insomnia, I reviewed all the numbers I am responsible for knowing by heart. I have never added them up, but, were I to do so, I should have an impressively large number. My guess is that my situation—or is it a condition?—is not so different from yours.

The first among the numbers I am responsible for is my own telephone number. In fact, in my case, this means four numbers: We have two phones in our apartment (owing to our needing an extra line for the Internet), there is the phone at my office, and there is our car phone (which we bought as much for security as anything else). Four phone numbers to commit to memory isn't so bad, but then, in the past few years the phone company has seen fit to change our area code from 312 to 708 to 847, which adds to the complication. Then there are the others I seem to have memorized, numbers of relatives, of friends, of business associates I call frequently. These constitute another 15 or so numbers. Add in here, for out-of-towners, their area codes (and, increasingly, their changed area codes).

New numbers have been added to my repertoire in recent years. Begin with the PIN that allows me entry into my checking account at cash stations. I now live in a building whose inside garage requires a security number that must be tapped into the door lock to get from the garage into the building. The building changes this number from time to time, and I occasionally find myself tapping in the old number. Then there is my e-mail password, which isn't a number but might as well be; roughly every four months I get an e-mail telling me that I have to change this, too.

I long ago memorized my car's license number. I haven't memorized either my checking-account or savings-account numbers, though my bank asks me to write out the number 39000 on all my savings deposits and withdrawals. I have a vault number, which I suppose I don't have to have memorized, but which, for extra credit (what a terrific student!), I memorized anyway. I have nearly memorized my American Express card number, though there is no real need to do so.

I do have the birthdays of children and now grandchildren to remember; so, too, my wedding anniversary. Then there are all the historical dates a supposedly cultured gent is supposed to know: Bastille Day, Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox, the two Russian revolutions, the date of the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Of all the theories of memory, the one I like best—I do not say believe in—is that which compares the memory to a crowded closet, so that when one puts something new in something old must go out. If this were so with numbers, I shouldn't mind getting rid of a fair amount of sports statistics that I acquired when young. I no longer need to know that Hack Wilson, who once drove in 190 RBIs, wore a size 5 shoe; or that Roy Emerson has won more grand slam tournaments, 12, than any other tennis player, living or dead (Rod Laver and Bjorn Borg are second with 11); or that Wilt Chamberlain had a lifetime freethrow shooting percentage of only 51 percent. But, damn it, I do know these numbers and can't seem to shake them.

Meanwhile, I seem to have lost some fundamental information. Without looking it up, I can no longer tell the number of feet in a mile. I am not sure of the difference between a meter and a yard, though I am fairly sure the former is longer. I sometimes feel lucky to remember the date of the 1832 Reform Bill.

How many of what M. Poirot calls his little grey cells do I use up just trying to retain all these figures in my head? If you know the number, please, do me a favor, keep it to yourself. I haven't room for it anyway.

Joseph Epstein

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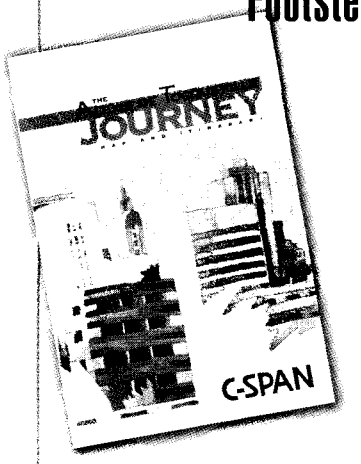

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Jesse at the Helm

Rather than exhibiting "cleverness," as Fred Barnes put it ("The Ascendency of Jesse Helms," Aug. 11), Sen. Helms was taken to the cleaners by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the subject of U.N. "reform." All that Helms has to show for it is a lousy T-shirt saying "Somebody at the State Department loves me"—which he actually wore to a softball game.

Helms said on the *Evans & Novak* show that the U.N. had not reimbursed the United States for billions of dollars worth of peacekeeping assistance. A March 1996 General Accounting Office report put the figure at $4.8 billion, wiping out the so-called debt to the U.N. Nevertheless, Helms went along with a federal financial bailout of the U.N. because his staff convinced "Senator No" that he should go down in history as "Senator Yes."

As for the "shrewd" reforms: Helms settled for a cut of only 1,000 U.N. posts that were already vacant! In a *Foreign Affairs* article last year, Helms had threatened to campaign for U.S. withdrawal from the U.N. unless it agreed to a cut of 50 percent in its worldwide bureaucracy of 53,000 employees. None of the "reform" plans, incidentally, eliminates the $102,000 annual U.N. pension for former U.N. secretary general and Nazi war criminal Kurt Waldheim.

Finally, and most important, this phony "reform" package has *not* passed the House. Rep. Roscoe Bartlett, sponsor of the United Nations Erroneous Debt Act, is still insisting that the U.N. pay its debt to the United States. He will move to strike all payments for back dues to the U.N. from the relevant appropriations bills.

Cliff Kincaid
Owings, MD

As a conservative Republican, I have great respect and admiration for longtime Republican senator Jesse Helms. He has demonstrated a lifetime of leadership and courage on issues that are near and dear to conservative hearts.

I find it morally indefensible, however, that while Sen. Helms denies Bill Weld a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee because he thinks he is soft on drugs, Helms remains the protector and booster of the tobacco industry.

The worst drug abuse in the United States involves not marijuana, cocaine, or heroin, but nicotine. The Food and Drug Administration estimates that 3,000 children each day begin smoking cigarettes, 1,000 of whom will die from the addictions they develop.

If anything else caused as much premature death and grief as tobacco, Americans would have demanded a change decades ago. Modest measures are finally being put in place to call the tobacco industry to account for killing millions of Americans.

Will there ever be a courageous tobacco-state legislator who stands up for what is right and takes on the tobacco companies?

Oren M. Spiegler
Pittsburgh, PA

Fred Barnes makes two careless assertions that tarnish an otherwise excellent piece of reporting on Jesse Helms.

To claim that Jesse Helms "is the most important conservative of the past 25 years," Ronald Reagan excepted, is intriguing, but wrong. Yes, since seizing the House, Newt Gingrich "hasn't done much with it." And yet for all his shortcomings—and there are many—Gingrich proved convincingly in 1994 that conservative ideas can dominate at the local level, something that had been in serious doubt for the previous 40 years. For that, Gingrich has earned a debt of gratitude from conservatives that overshadows everything Jesse Helms has done in a fine and distinguished career.

Also, to suggest that Helms ended the Kissinger era in foreign policy by pushing a "morality in foreign policy" plank through the 1976 Republican convention is absurd. The Kissinger era ended, simply and entirely, with the inauguration of Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Nicholas Schulz
Washington, DC

Should Weld Be Felled?

Regarding Tucker Carlson's suggestion that we might be better off

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with William Weld in Mexico City ("What Is Weld Up To?," Aug. 11), the fate of Jimmy Carter's ambassador to Mexico is instructive. Upon leaving that post, he stooped to assume the position of running mate to 1980 independent presidential candidate John Anderson, thereby relegating himself to eternal obscurity (remember Patrick Lucey, former two-term governor of Wisconsin?). By letting Weld through, Helms can ensure that the has-been from Massachusetts remains one. Otherwise, Jesse serves Weld's interests by providing a pretext for the Left to make Weld a martyr.

BRUCE ANDREW
BERLIN, GERMANY

WHOLE-MATH ZEALOTS

In my article on whole math ("Exam Scam," Aug. 4), I quoted an exchange between Madalyn McDaniel and her son, who was a student in the Interactive Mathematics Program. When the son became frustrated with being expected to invent his own mathematical procedures, Mrs. McDaniel said, "Look in the book, it will explain." And the son replied, "Mom, there is no book."

The developers of the Interactive Mathematics Program say that this account is "incomplete and inaccurate" because their curriculum is published as a "hardcover student textbook" (Correspondence, Aug. 18). But when Mrs. McDaniel's son was in the program, there was no hardcover book, only a series of handouts. Not until this year were the handouts bound between hard covers for the first two years of the program, and there are still no books for the last two years.

Moreover, to call the Interactive Mathematics Program's publications "textbooks" is misleading in the extreme. That word suggests a book that provides instruction and explanation—what Madalyn McDaniel's son was looking for. This is the very opposite of what whole-math enthusiasts, like the developers of the Interactive Mathematics Program, believe in. Their handouts and hardcovers give problems and assignments—which students are supposed to figure out for themselves.

Whole math is a radical approach that many of its followers embrace with an almost religious fervor. But if it's such a good idea, one has to ask, why do whole-math zealots try so hard (claiming to have "textbooks," for example) to make it appear as though what they're doing is not at all out of the ordinary?

LYNNE V. CHENEY
JACKSON, WY

MOORE PUKE FOR THE PAIR

I must say that after reading Christopher Caldwell's "The Pair from Pascagoula" (Aug. 11), I wholeheartedly agree with Mississippi Gov. Kirk Fordice: I want to puke too.

What Michael Moore and Richard Scruggs are really doing is legalizing extortion. And they have just begun the fight. What great fun they will have putting their spin on the next "demon" that we stupid Americans don't understand. Here come the fearless knights of America, stomping out all these hated products! Who's fooling whom?

If Mike Moore, the conscience of America, hates tobacco so much, why would he want to take tobacco money for his political campaigns? Regarding his real motives, actions speak louder than words.

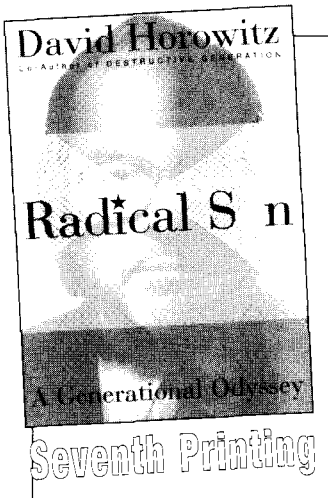
PAULINE J. RIDLE
MIDLOTHIAN, VA

POLITICAL THUMBSCREW

How shocking (but not surprising) to read that the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund has compelled Norma Cantu to challenge the right of administrators at Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law to use "objective measurements of academic performance" for selecting new students ("Norma Cantu's Cant," Aug. 11). There is absolutely nothing to suggest that the selection processes at the University of California graduate schools are anything but a search for the most able students.

Is Norma Cantu a real education professional, or is she first and foremost a political tool?

T. BRUCE GRAHAM
PORT HUENEME, CA



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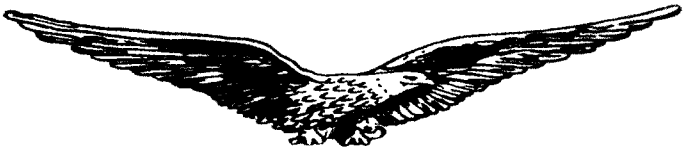

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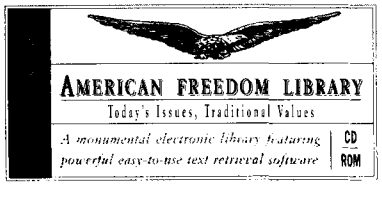

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Is There A WORLDWIDE CONSERVATIVE CRACK-UP? *a symposium*

In June, the editors of THE WEEKLY STANDARD *asked 28 writers, thinkers, activists, and political professionals for their thoughts on the following proposition:*

Conservatives worldwide are in a peculiar state. On the one hand, their ideas seem to be ascendant; on the other hand, the parties and politicians that represent them seem to be getting battered. Clinton, Blair, and Jospin are victorious, while politicians allied with what we think of as "conservative" ideas about the free market, regulation, the size of government, and traditional morality are reeling from defeat after defeat. In the United States, the Republican Congress has lost its moorings in the wake of Bill Clinton's reelection.

What's going on? What does it mean? What happened to the confident conservatism of Thatcher, Reagan, and the 1994 Republican congressional victory?

Their responses appear below, in alphabetical order.

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Michael Barone

This is not the first time that a movement's candidates have been beaten while its ideas are ascendant. Forty years ago, in the 1950s, elections were won by Eisenhower, Churchill and Macmillan, Adenauer, the Liberal Democrats of Japan, de Gaulle. They slowed but did not stop the movement toward the welfare state that began in the 1940s; it gained speed again in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the 1950s, the advocates of the welfare state were frustrated, puzzled, and harshly critical of their own parties. But things were going their way. Taxes were inching up, welfare-state protections were marginally expanded, political energy on the right was spent not on delegitimizing the welfare state but on identifying with it.

So it is today, in reverse. Political forces and governmental mechanisms are now ratcheting the size of government down, not up; government agencies are being privatized and welfare programs withering away; even middle-class entitlements are under attack. Forty years ago politicians of the right proclaimed themselves liberals; now politicians of the left are eager to assure one and all of their conservatism. Since Margaret Thatcher's victory in May 1979, with only a few exceptions, parties of the left have won elections only when they have moved convincingly to the right. If left parties have been winning more elections lately, it is only because politicians like Clinton, Tony Blair, and Italy's former Communists have learned this lesson. Even those few who have won after campaigning as leftists, like Lionel Jospin in France, quickly move to the right after taking office.

They are responding to the very powerful forces that prevent governments from moving sharply to the left. One is the international marketplace. The flow of money and trade is freer even than in the halcyon years before 1914, and the country that devalues its currency or overpays its workers will be sharply punished. So will the politicians who allow these things to happen. Jospin will come to understand that, as Mitterrand came to understand it in 1983, as Blair and Italy's Romano Prodi and Clinton understand it now.

In this international market economy, ordinary people are increasingly less inclined to seek Franklin Roosevelt's security than to imitate Margaret Thatcher's striving. Memories of the deprivations of the 1930s are dimming now to darkness, and people do not feel in need of protection from a sudden collapse of the economy. Instead the recalled bad times are the 1970s, when government was both bullying and feckless, obstructive and incompetent; when inflation and stagnation undermined the ordinary citizen's lifelong project of accumulating wealth. Now people seek not entitlements and comfortable niches but a solid currency and the chance to work their way ahead. This is the second major force preventing a shift to the left.

The third is the de-sanctioning of pathological behaviors like crime and welfare dependency, which in the United States in the mid-1990s have been declining as sharply as they were increasing in the awful years from 1965 to 1975. The idea is dying that those who are disadvantaged should be excused for misbehaving; the idea is gaining strength that all should be judged by the same rigorous standards. This process is very far from being completed and could stand to go much farther. But it has gone some ways. If some damaging behaviors like divorce have not lost sanction, others like fatherless child-rearing have: Dan Quayle was right.

But he is no longer in public office. Conservatives are understandably irritated when parties of the left win elections. But democracy requires alternation in office, and it is corrosive for any party—British Tories, congressional Democrats—to be in office too long. Except in crisis, the important thing is which ideas, not which individuals, are in the saddle. And these days, most of those ideas are conservative.

Michael Barone is a senior staff editor at **Reader's Digest** *and co-author of* **The Almanac of American Politics 1998** *(National Journal/Times Books).*

Gary L. Bauer

Conservatives since Reagan and Thatcher have been struggling. In the last two U.S. elections, the Republican candidates for president have averaged less than 40 percent of the popular vote. Conservatives in Britain just experienced their worst drubbing in history.

What Reagan and Thatcher understood, and what too few leaders comprehend today, is that the conservative *movement* is no party wing. Thatcher was highly popular with working-class voters in Britain. She sided with the rank and file against many of their Marxist union leaders. Reagan, similarly, was not ashamed to court the "God and country" vote represented by everyone from evangelicals and Catholics to

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the American Legion.

To win, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair wrap their liberal policies in conservative rhetoric. Blair promised a "New Labour." At last year's National Education Summit, Republican governors spoke about training a more efficient work force to supply the needs of multinational corporations. Clinton spoke about moral values in education, the proper place of religious free expression in the schools, and the importance of school safety. Clinton's liberal policies will not help in any of these areas. But his speech, not those of the Republicans, addressed the concerns of "soccer moms" and Little League dads. No wonder Americans consistently tell pollsters that Clinton "cares about people like me."

In 1992 and 1996, Republican campaigns *confused* the message on family tax relief, *embraced* realpolitik in foreign policy to the exclusion of historic American values, and *avoided* the social issues.

On taxes, Republicans failed to make the case boldly for lightening the burden on families. The moral case needs to be made why families are more to be trusted to spend their own resources than government bureaucrats are. When conservatives argue for pro-family tax relief, we are saying that "human capital" is a nation's ultimate resource. Disparaging tax relief for families with children not only fails to move the agenda of smaller government and lower taxes generally, it serves to reinforce the liberal media stereotype of Republicans as "the party of the rich."

The collapse of the Berlin Wall does not mean "the end of history." We seek no new enemies. But we should recognize hostility when we see it. We do not support national defense in order to maintain jobs in California—as Bob Dole came close to saying—but to protect Americans at home and abroad. Evil exists. The Pan Am explosion over Lockerbie, Scotland, drugs imported onto our streets, U.S. forces targeted in the Middle East or in the Straits of Formosa—all of these teach us that America cannot always avoid enemies.

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil in the world is for good men to do nothing," said Edmund Burke 200 years ago. In this age of the Internet and space travel, that wisdom is reinforced. Americans cannot hide from the world.

Margaret Thatcher was never as personally beloved as Ronald Reagan. Still, her "stern nurse" demeanor was politically attractive to voters in Britain because she spoke to the concerns of their hearts. When asked why it was worth fighting for the Falklands, a tough British sailor on his way to the war said simply: "It's so we can walk about in the world with our heads held up."

Ronald Reagan never abandoned the social issues. Even when he could not move Congress, he used the "bully pulpit" of the White House to move the hearts of the people. Leaving office, beloved by millions, he wistfully said he wished he had done more to stem the tide of abortion. He simply and eloquently upheld the right to life of the most vulnerable among us. He succeeded because he spoke common sense with uncommon conviction.

Today, it is especially important for conservatives to hold fast to "the permanent things." With a growing economy, with the deficit clearly coming down, and with the country at peace, it is essential that conservatives speak to those issues that Americans tell us still trouble them. Something is terribly wrong when a young woman can go to the prom in New Jersey, give birth to her child in the girls' room, stuff her baby's body in the trash can, and return to the dance floor to request a favorite heavy-metal tune, "The Unforgiven." This is not an isolated occurrence. George Will suggests she was taught that behavior by the Supreme Court's extreme rulings on abortion. And a president who vetoes a bill to ban partial-birth abortions is sending a devastating signal about lives that are "unwanted."

Conservatives here and abroad need to advance policies that make people proud again. We should stand unapologetically for the beliefs that move mothers and fathers. Human rights and national defense are legitimate objects of conservative politics. So are

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lower taxes and cultural renewal. People will care when they know their leaders care.

Gary L. Bauer is president of the Family Research Council.

Jeffrey Bell

I recently read a draft copy of Dinesh D'Souza's new political biography of Ronald Reagan. I hope a lot of conservatives read this book when it comes out this fall, for a close review of Reagan's career is particularly illuminating given the state of conservative politics today.

In every memorable decision he made in his presidency, Reagan invoked morality as his central impetus, even in situations that at first glance did not appear particularly moral in nature. His decision early in his presidency to fire striking air-traffic controllers, for example, has in retrospect been analyzed as a major turning point in the history of relations between management and labor, paving the way for a painful and historic corporate restructuring that wound up revitalizing American business. There is a lot of truth to this analysis. But at the time, Reagan said nothing about business, deregulation, or the proper balance between management and labor. He fired the controllers because he believed there is no right to strike against the public. Period. He gave a speech saying this, and the American public immediately and overwhelmingly agreed.

In 1986 at the Reykjavik summit, Reagan turned down Mikhail Gorbachev's offer of a massive and asymmetrical Soviet reduction in strategic and intermediate nuclear weapons, contingent mainly on U.S. agreement to severely restrict research on the Strategic Defense Initiative. Secretary of State George Shultz and all of Reagan's key advisers begged him to accept, asking him how it would look to the public when it was learned that a historic arms agreement had been sacrificed to an anti-missile program that was little more than an idea, not even out of the laboratory. Reagan's answer was that it would be wrong for the government to deny the American people any hope of an attempt to defend themselves against nuclear attack.

Amid apocalyptic headlines and network reports of exactly the sort Shultz feared, Reagan returned home, went on television, and told the American people exactly what he had told Shultz: Much as he wanted the missile reductions, he could not bring himself to leave the American people unprotected. The American people agreed massively, and what seemed to be building into a crisis of Reagan's presidency ended abruptly. Within a few months, Gorbachev was offering many of the same missile reductions without the SDI kicker, Reagan and Richard Perle's "zero option" for Europe—contemptuously rejected by the Soviets a few years earlier—had been agreed to, and the Cold War was rapidly heading to its surprising end.

This is not the place to revisit all the old arguments about how much credit Reagan deserves for the good things that happened on his watch. We know

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Reagan's many detractors will continue to make their ingenious arguments as to why exactly the same things would have happened under President Jimmy Carter or President Walter Mondale, only without those deficits. The interesting thing for this discussion is how intensely moral Reagan's decision-making was, and how well this worked for him politically. The moral center of his politics is what removes him more completely from today's conservative leaders than anything else about him.

In American politics, morality is not primarily about believing in God or having a restrained lifestyle, though these are viewed as goods by most voters. In American politics, morality tends to be bound up with the idea of human equality, the core idea on which the

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country was founded. If it is not, moral politics becomes too didactic and is almost always unsuccessful.

It is often remarked that the United States is the only Western democracy that has a vibrant, mass-based social-conservative movement. The obvious point is that it is also the only Western democracy that retains a lot of people who have high levels of religious involvement. In Western Europe, where people don't go to church, conservative politics is mainly economic and occasionally ethnic and/or anti-immigrant. When irreligion and relativism spread more fully to the United States, we're destined to become a larger Netherlands. End of story.

Or is it? Tocqueville wrote about the gap in religious practice between the United States and Europe in 1831. He suspected it had more to do with the workings of equality than with North America's being a cultural backwater. Ronald Reagan is the politician of our era, as Lincoln was of his, who best understood the intimate connection between morality and equality in our politics. He wanted to export democracy and human rights; his Republican rivals preferred to focus on power politics. He advocated personal tax relief; his opponents preferred tax cuts for corporations and investors. He thought legalized abortion was a central issue and was unapologetic about wanting to end it; his Republican opponents, most of them pro-life, wanted it at the periphery of politics. They failed to understand that abortion will continue to be the bloody crossroads of American politics because it is not just about morality but about universal human equality.

Conservative political leaders will begin to get their act together when they understand that Reagan's success was not about being a good speaker, but about the moral, egalitarian, thoroughly American content of what he said.

Jeffrey Bell is president of the Campaign for Working Families and author of **Populism and Elitism: Politics in the Age of Inequality** *(Regnery Gateway).*

Walter Berns

Ask a conservative what he wants to conserve and he is likely to say "freedom," including the freedom to spend his own money; hence, his dislike of taxes. But ask the typical American (or British or French) voter the same question and the first thing that comes to his mind is "my benefits": Social Security, unemployment compensation, food stamps, school lunches, government health insurance, care of the elderly, free (or in America, subsidized) higher education, and paid (and in France, lengthy) vacations. All these benefits are the gift of the liberal or socialist governments under which he has lived since the Depression of the 1930s and, particularly, since the end of World War II. Conservatives have little to offer the typical voter. Tax relief? He thinks only the rich have capital gains, and his modest estate is not subject to a tax. Less regulation? He is comfortable with regulation. A stronger national defense? The Cold War is over. A smaller government? But, as he sees it, the government is not on *his* back.

As for freedom, whatever the case with the British and French, the American thinks he is freer than he has ever been, and he knows he has liberalism to thank for that. It was not conservatives who put the censors out of business, giving him the freedom to entertain himself as he sees fit (and assuring him that there is nothing shameful in whatever he sees fit); not conservatives who liberated women, from the kitchen and nursery to the work force, making them self-sufficient, able to take care of themselves, thereby allowing men both to have them—readily, thanks to the sexual revolution, another of liberalism's benefactions—and leave them with a good conscience; not conservatives who promoted the idea of no-fault divorces; and, to sum it up, it was not conservatives who assaulted the culture and, in the words of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, succeeded in "defining deviancy down." Not surprisingly, the nation that once mourned the deaths of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln now celebrates the lives of Madonna, Robert Mapplethorpe, and even Larry Flynt.

It is with something like this in mind that the editors speak of conservatism and "traditional morality." I don't doubt that conservatives are for it, but I wonder what they can do about it, or, more precisely, what they can do to strengthen it. If morality was a part of our tradition, as the term implies, so were the institutions that fostered and sustained it, by which I mean the family and the family's ally, the censor. Can conservatives persuade women to leave the workplace and return to the kitchen and nursery, or, as one of our Founding Fathers put it, to the "domestic society" where manners are formed and morality taught, and where "the lovely and accomplished woman shines with superiour lustre"? Right now we're having trouble keeping them out of the trenches.

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By censorship, I don't mean putting an "adults only" label on films, or a V-chip (combined with a rating system) in television sets. Such labels and ratings are merely statements intended by politicians to placate the "concerned parents" among their constituents, and they serve, if they serve at all, only as buyers guides for the kids (and dirty old men). I mean censorship of the sort we used to have; for example, the Motion Picture Production Code, which, when enforced (and enforced it was until not so many years ago), favored films upholding "the sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home" and prevented the distribution of films showing violence, nudity, and "casual or promiscuous sex." But liberals have succeeded in making the word censorship, in any of its forms, the one dirty word in the American lexicon, with the result that even Bill Bennett and Bob Dole feel obliged to reassure the public that they are opposed to it. And who can blame them?

Yet, the same public buys millions of copies of Bennett's *Book of Virtues*, which suggests an awareness that our culture is awry, and that something ought to be done about it. And something—not much, but something—is being done about it. Congressional Republicans managed to pass the Defense of Marriage Act (and shamed the president into signing it), and, a couple of months ago, Louisiana, hoping to cut back on the number of divorces, passed a law allowing a couple (and only a male and female couple) the option of entering into a "covenant marriage," defined as a lifelong relationship, not readily terminated.

The law may or may not do any good, but at least this can be said in its favor: The *New York Times* denounced it as stupid.

Walter Berns is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Malcolm Bradbury

Conservatives worldwide are in a peculiar state. On the one hand, their ideas seem to be ascendant; on the other hand, the parties and politicians that represent them seem to be getting battered. Clinton, Blair, and Jospin are victorious, while politicians allied with what we think of as "conservative" ideas about the free market, regulation, the size of government, and traditional morality are reeling from defeat after defeat. In the United States, the Republican Congress has lost its moorings in the wake of Bill Clinton's reelection. What's going on? What does it mean? What happened to the confident conservatism of Thatcher, Reagan, and the 1994 Republican congressional victory?

May 1 is a date British Conservatives will not forget. Their defeat was substantial, overwhelming, a decisive turn in politics. The damage to the historical credibility of the Major administration is now being done. It's being typed as corrupt, sleazy, bankrupt of ideas. In truth, as governments go, it wasn't a bad one. Inflation and taxes were held low, unemployment was falling fast. Few governments have so generously left the economy in such fine shape to successors. Much of the assault on "gray" John Major and his ministers was manufactured, not least by a hostile, competitive press colluding with leaks from a well-run Labour-party media machine.

But the 1997 election was probably lost back in 1992. Then John Major won a fourth Conservative term against the odds, his own party's expectations, and the hopes of assorted opinion-makers, intellectuals, and power-brokers who had already made their plans for the New Labour Nineties. It was lost again when an unacknowledged and ill-managed recession wiped out many of the '80s gains, and Britain incompetently withdrew from the European system of fixed exchange rates, discrediting Tory economic policies; lost yet again when internal division over Europe left the party fighting not Labour but itself.

For the moment, the Conservative party in Britain is dead in the water, and the appointment of untried William Hague as its new leader is not reassuring. New Labour is still enjoying a happy honeymoon. But if the Conservatives are wounded, conservatism is far from dead. Blair has inherited the rewards and many of the ideas of Thatcherite policies. He knows his key electoral support lies in the center ground. Paradoxically, his greatest danger lies in his large majority. It can only embolden those on the Labour left, who read the situation as a mandate for more radical policies.

There's no doubt that—with New Labour in Britain, Jospin's victory in France, growing problems for Kohl in Germany—a new mood is sweeping

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Europe. It's marked by strong millennial feelings, characteristic of the ending of centuries. The great transformations of the 1980s—the end of the Cold War, the collapse of Marxism, the rise of the globalized, omnipotent free market—are already historicized. The '80s statues have mostly fallen off the pedestals: Mitterrand, Reagan, and Thatcher are ghosts from the past; only a wounded Kohl remains. The 20th century—a century of European horrors—is fading too, and an agenda for the 21st century is already taking shape. In Britain, new young voters lived all their lives with Tory administrations. Though not instinctively left-wing, they're deeply shaped by the trendy agendas of the past two decades: post-colonialism, multiculturalism, feminism, gay issues, green politics, New Age sensibilities, designer consumerism, streetwise cynicism about crime, sex, drugs, Web-site values.

Tony Blair's decision to support a millennium *grand projet*, a great exhibition at Greenwich in 2000, declares his bid to make New Labour look like the party of the new age. No previous Labour government has stayed in office for two terms. Yet Conservatives will probably have to reconcile themselves to this—unless, under Hague, they can renew their long-term vision, overcome internal squabbling, restructure party organization, and above all appeal to a new voting generation. The Conservative base now is largely among the aging. They've lost virtually all the intellectual support that, in the '80s, made Thatcher's policies feel like a real historical revolution.

Previous Labour governments have collapsed through ideological division, bad economic management, above all indebtedness to radical interest groups demanding financial rewards or aggressive government intervention. Blair knows these dangers, but his lobbies are already demanding their share. Bans on smoking, laws against fox hunting, threats of high taxation on automobile owners, ministerial criticism of the "fat cat" company directors, "windfall taxes"—all have an anti-libertarian spirit, the smell of class envy and the interventionist nanny state about them.

The British are quiet anarchists—unlike the French, who are noisy ones. But they dearly love their liberties; the rise of state power is a serious concern on which Conservatives should capitalize. So is the break-up of the United Kingdom—the move toward devolved assemblies in Scotland and Wales. A new government can create new political hopes; it can also open up dangerous national schisms. Only when Conservatives have a radical mess to transform, the ideas and policies to transform it, and an identification with real anxieties of people in a time of profound social and domestic change will they recapture their place in politics—and history.

Malcolm Bradbury, the English novelist and scholar, last wrote for* THE WEEKLY STANDARD *about Hong Kong.

David Brock

The Republican Congress lost its moorings not after President Clinton won reelection in 1996, but on taking power in 1994. Ideologues generally don't have sound strategic judgment, as Hillary Clinton proved with her health-care initiative, and as Newt Gingrich proved with the 1995 government shutdown fiasco. Winning one election is not a license to launch a holy war. The Clinton administration learned that Americans don't like extremists of any stripe only after a crushing defeat in 1994. The question now is whether the Republican leadership can also learn before the *Titanic* sinks.

Conservative Republicans believed their own rhetoric and post-1994 press notices about a wholesale shift in the mood of the electorate, a mistake nicely illustrated in the editors' question. To continue to believe that "conservative ideas seem to be ascendant" in the face of contrary evidence is to invite ruin. The country is ideologically schizophrenic. People favor cutting government spending and curbing regulation, but they don't want to sacrifice education, the environment, or health insurance for poor kids. The task for conservatives is to convince the public that they have the right answers to these social problems. School vouchers vs. government-run schools should be a winner. But in the face of a hostile press, conservatives have never been adept at laying the groundwork for change. The singular achievement of the 104th Congress, the overhaul of welfare, came more than a decade after Charles Murray published *Losing Ground*.

The Republican victory was as much a vote against game-playing in Washington by the arrogant Democratic congressional party as it was about ideology. When the Republicans came in, they became part of that corrupt establishment. John Kasich's attack on corporate welfare died on the vine. The present tax bill pays off the religious Right (the child tax credit) and major Republican donors like Archer Daniels Midland (the ethanol subsidy). GOP freshmen were pressured by the leadership to drop their support of a

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ban on soft money. And conservatives abandoned anti-government principles to support the V-chip and Internet censorship. All of this, of course, was foreshadowed within weeks of Gingrich's taking office in his cynical and opportunistic book deal.

But the blame can't all be laid at Gingrich's door. In acquiescing to the nomination of Bob Dole, GOP leaders squandered another opportunity. The critical moment came when Paul Weyrich, Gary Bauer, Grover Norquist, and others called a press conference to block Colin Powell, who has more moderate views on abortion and affirmative action, from entering the Republican primaries. I don't know if this preemptive strike influenced Powell's decision, or if I could have supported Powell had he run, but I do know that these self-appointed "conservative leaders" do not speak for me or millions of other conservatives.

The challenge is even deeper than assembling a majority and finding someone to lead it. Conservatism, as it is currently constituted and represented by conservative elites, is failing because in some respects it is wrong. Gingrich's stumbling has allowed the mask to slip. The emerging anti-immigrant consensus, pushed by Pat Buchanan and *National Review*, is one troubling development. Another is the waging of an ugly culture war by any and all means. Robert Bork, in his recent book *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, proposed a constitutional amendment to allow Congress to overrule judicial opinions with which it disagrees, a radical and dangerous view.

If I were a Republican strategist, here's what I'd advise: Side with real people and real families against the vested interests in both parties. Concentrate on issues where you already have a majority, like abolishing the IRS. Exploit the divisions between young and old by leading on Medicare and Social Security reform. "Conservation" should be a conservative issue. Stop turning over political and policy differences to prosecutors and drop the personal attacks. Was mine the only heart that sank when George Bush ascended the platform at the 1996 Republican convention and trashed the personal character of the first lady? Partisan railing against the volunteer summit and President Clinton's national dialogue on race is bad politics. Find a way to favor both while advancing the conservative case. Don't write off the black vote anymore.

Look ahead, not back. The core principles of Reagan and Thatcher are alive and well, but politics is changing in a fundamental way, both here and abroad. The terms "liberal" and "conservative" don't even mean much anymore except inside the Beltway, in places like WEEKLY STANDARD symposia. Take a cue from Reagan, who once presciently observed that "there is no left or right, only an up or down." The coming fault lines are something like change/status quo; consensus/partisanship; and tolerance/intolerance. If conservatives can advance their ideas of freedom, liberty, and responsibility within these lines, they might start winning, and they might also deserve to.

David Brock is an investigative writer for the **American Spectator** *and the author of* **The Seduction of Hillary Rodham** *(Free Press).*

Eliot A. Cohen

There are ample explanations for the apparent feebleness of conservative parties and politicians: the flabbiness bred of a decade or more of spectacular success, the adroitness of their opponents (a talented if shallow group), and sheer bad luck. The absence of foreign policy crises also helps explain the conservative retreat from power: Who would have voted for Bill Clinton if they thought he might have to lead the United States to war? Thus, like most major events, the conservative setbacks of the 1990s are overdetermined. About some of the causes—the skill of telegenic trimmers on the other side, for example—conservatives can do little. But in other cases there are some lessons they might learn.

The truth is that most people seem to prefer conservative policies while disliking conservatives, who manage to seem doctrinaire and curiously anti-patriotic in their domestic policies. Take as an example the usual conservative position on the environment. While most Americans think it absurd to let the fate of the snail darter determine the fate of farmers dependent on large irrigation projects, most Americans also like an unpolluted environment and take pride in our national parks—both tributes to activist government. Fairly or not, conservatives have been pegged as the people who will oppose almost any environmental measure and would, if they could, privatize the national parks, all in the name of free enterprise. Which conservatives, without prompting, will admit that government regulation has had a wholesome effect on the air we breathe and the water we drink, or celebrate the national parks as one of the glories of the United States?

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The environmental issue illuminates a central problem of conservative statesmanship: its mindless opposition to the state. For too long conservatives have viewed government as either enemy or excrescence, excluding only the military from a general opposition to all its works. Yet most Americans appreciate the work of, and should take pride in the work of, the Public Health Service, the Library of Congress, and the Geological Survey, to take only a few examples. Conservatives declaim against liberal history textbooks, but how many are willing to spend adequate sums of money to acquire, protect, and maintain Civil War battlefields?

It is politically implausible to run for office on a platform of contempt for all officeholders. Far worse, however, are the moral consequences that flow from such a contradiction—a stunting and demeaning of the very notion of public service. Having taught a younger generation that government is everywhere and always to be mistrusted, why should conservatives find it surprising that men and women of character and ambition would rather devote their energies to some other activity? The Founders did not envision or desire a feeble government, and they did not shrink from endorsing its essential functions. While knowing the limits of what government can do, they paid due honor to its legitimate activities. The anti-government temper of modern conservatives subverts their own objectives and often expresses itself in a mean-spirited way. The indifference, and in some cases malicious pleasure, shown by some conservatives at the shutdown of the federal government—an event that brought real hardship to clerks and secretaries living from paycheck to paycheck—raised questions, quite properly, about the fitness of such people to rule.

The libertarian streak in contemporary conservatism is one of the most corrosive imaginable, and in its spread lies one of the root causes of conservative ill fortune. It is often expressed as a celebration of greed first and foremost, and of moral license secondarily. To an astonishing degree, conservatives have put forward economic activity as the most noble of human activities, neglecting some of the destructive (possibly unavoidable) side effects of unbridled capitalism and turning acquisitiveness into a core human virtue. The uneasy coexistence of moral and economic conservatives will have to get uneasier yet before this problem is resolved.

None of this is to say that conservatives need to steal a page from liberalism if they are to regain their position. Rather, they might do well to reflect on their non-libertarian traditions (think of Teddy Roosevelt, for example) and to search for ways that couple their generally prudent opposition to unnecessary regulation of private activity with a regard for what government can and should do well, and an appreciation for those values that transcend making money. Until they do this, they cannot expect, and will not deserve, the successes they crave.

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Noemie Emery

Political people divide by ideas, which are always important. They are also divided by style, which is sometimes more pertinent, as it decides who and what gets to govern, and whose ideas are passed into law. In the style divide, one side belongs to Reagan and FDR, who understood how to govern, by attracting new people. The other belongs to the jihad style of the Goldwater and McGovern conventions, which tends to drive people away. The second group thinks it lives in a theocracy, where the main idea is to bear witness, no matter how many people are stunned by your theories. The first knows it lives in a democracy, where power derives from the will of the people, and that, without

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this behind it, no party holds power for long.

The Goldwater and McGovern campaigns were the parties stripped down to their cores, and proudly so, with no interest in others. What Roosevelt and Reagan knew is that governing depends on integrating one's core within a larger majority structure, where it influences but does not manage the whole. In 1972, the Democrats turned into Goldwater liberals and lost the presidency for an extended period. Sometimes the Republicans have returned the favor, becoming McGovern conservatives, putting their power in doubt. Both parties are now all core and no coalition, unable to affix the broad middle for more than a moment, and then in response to the other's excesses. The party that figures out how *on its terms* to appeal to the middle will control politics for the next generation. But to do this, it will have to change its ways.

Goldwaters and McGoverns accentuate differences, excluding those who differ on discrete points of policy. Reagans and Roosevelts know it is less important to exclude those who differ than to subsume them in transcendent, overarching common interests. From them, conservatives should learn to frame their issues in terms of large and sweeping moral goals. They should take the lead in moving the country to a trans- and post-racial future, now that liberals have formally endorsed the ideas of identity, grievance, and victimhood that have made the West Bank, Bosnia, and Northern Ireland such wonderful places to live. Conservatives should back the kinds of affirmative action that guarantee access, not outcomes, and that reward personal merit and enterprise. They should urge that the country drop all racial classifications from the national Census, as a sign that the country relates to its people as citizens, not interchangeable members of blocs. They should make their party a home, not just for the 12 percent who want a legal ban on all forms of abortion, but for the 70-plus percent who favor restraints and restrictions, who are disturbed by the move to a throw-away culture and the conflation of life with a "choice." Most of the people described as "pro-choice" stop short at the first trimester, and many want restrictions even within it. They should be welcomed as allies, not decried and denounced.

In the flush of victory after the 1994 triumph, many movement conservatives called it the flowering of the Goldwater movement, imperiled in 1995 by Powellmania, which they saw as the ultimate menace. Powell, they said, was a Democrat, and should have remained so; and they invited him out of their party. In this, they got everything wrong. The Goldwater crusade was a cult movement, and would have remained so. It took Ronald Reagan, a Roosevelt backer, to make it a part of a national party by raiding the FDR base.

What made the difference? The likes of Powell did. The movement people were always there, in 1964, as in 1980. It was when an immigrant's son, raised in the Bronx by parents who worshiped the Roosevelts, was lured over the line by an inclusionist leader, that a governing conservative majority was born. McGovern and Goldwater lost voters and shed large chunks of their parties. Reagan and Roosevelt, among the most ideologically defined of American presidents, were still inclusionist, and won power by winning non-dogmatic voters and raiding the enemy's base. Conservatism became the governing movement when the Powells and the Reagan Democrats crossed over. If and when they cross back again, the movement will die. It will live on as a cult, as it did after the 1964 wipeout. It will hold meetings, emote, and make many statements. But the power will have passed to other men.

There is a nationwide base for a center-right movement, led by a corps of reform-minded governors, who reform schools and welfare, privatize, and cut taxes, while taming the gender gap, and winning 20-40 percent of the blacks. The key words are "center-right" and "reform." Governments in this country are center-right, or left-center. A right-right, or left-left, coalition is a contradiction in terms. Reagan and Roosevelt knew this. They preferred, in the end, power to purity, knowing that if you ask for 70 percent instead of 100 percent, you may get 60 percent, whereas purists get nothing. Which will conservatives opt for? Reagan and Roosevelt, for all their convictions, wanted big parties and got them, and sequential landslides. McGovern and Goldwater wanted pure parties. They got them. They then had them all to themselves.

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Francis Fukuyama

While I largely agree with the symposium's opening premise that we live in an age when conservative ideas have become dominant, I don't think it necessarily follows that conservative parties should everywhere be in power. Politics is, after all, the contestation over power, and if a big idea has been broadly

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accepted, then the contestation will be over smaller ideas or over personalities. Politics in the Byzantine Empire was organized around racing teams in the Hippodrome.

Many people have argued that parties of the left are in power because they have stolen the ideas of the right and repackaged them more effectively. This is true in the United States and Britain but less so in France, and it will probably not be true in Germany should Kohl be unseated in the upcoming election, so we need to be careful about overgeneralizing.

Tony Blair has been much more consistent (and impressive) as a repackager of conservative ideas than Clinton. He engaged in a tough behind-the-scenes struggle with old Labour and came out victorious. His early agenda—making the Bank of England independent, while lowering corporate tax rates—is much more consistently "Thatcherite" than were Clinton's early initiatives. Blair has openly defended the core of the Thatcher revolution (releasing the economy and political system from the stranglehold imposed by the trade unions), while bowing only stylistically toward a Clintonite agenda (improving educational standards, cracking down on tobacco companies, etc.).

Clinton, on the other hand, had to be dragged kicking and screaming towards the center early on with a lot of Republican help—primarily through their beating back of his early initiatives on gays in the military, the 1993 stimulus package, and health-care reform, and by the Republican victory in the 1994 mid-term election. In a broader way, conservatives (if we include in this category people like Fed chairman Alan Greenspan and a host of free-market economists) prepared the ground for Clinton's current success by handing him an economy that was in extraordinarily good shape. Clinton has been brilliant, however, in taking what was given to him and running with it, particularly after November 1994.

The situation in France is rather different, because the French have never gone through a Thatcherite revolution. A significant group of French conservatives remain Gaullists who are wedded to a large state and have never heard of the University of Chicago's economics department. Those conservatives who have are technocrats who, in contrast to Reagan and Thatcher, have been quite unsuccessful in articulating their point of view. Indeed, it is striking how the French have remained oblivious to the larger intellectual currents swirling around them, much more so than people in any number of less developed countries—from Mexico and Argentina to Russia. The French still believe in the possibility of politics—i.e., that sovereign publics can vote for leaders who want

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to reorder social and political priorities regardless of what global bond markets say. In today's terms this doesn't result in socialism, but in pathetic caricatures of socialist ideas like dealing with a high chronic rate of unemployment through cutting the work week and retirement age while maintaining benefit levels. France today has a youth unemployment rate of close to 30 percent, and given the way its political system works (a hyper-presidential pressure-cooker with few release valves), it is very possible that France may be on the verge of some kind of social explosion.

Germany is again different, because it at least has a class of conservative politicians and corporate managers who understand the deep problems of the contemporary German welfare state and realize that something must be done to get it under control. They face a Social Democratic party that has not yet been Blair-ized, but has been handicapped over the past two decades by weak and uncharismatic leaders. This situation will not last forever, and Germany is likely to move toward a more traditional social-democratic left that will delay the onset of needed reforms.

The parties of the left in Britain and America have been helped greatly by the fact that the charismatic conservatives who led their respective revolutions were replaced by extraordinarily routine ones who seemed to believe they inherited a right to rule. This process of gradual degeneration is probably inevitable and is one of the reasons we have two-party government.

Much as the editors of THE WEEKLY STANDARD

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may want to bemoan the political fortunes of conservatives around the world, America and much of the rest of the world are in pretty good shape at the moment. We all know about the U.S. economy, and global economic growth has been running at around 4 percent for much of this decade. We have not seen comparable levels of political stability in the international system in some time. Sit back and enjoy it, while it lasts.

Francis Fukuyama is Hirst professor of public policy at George Mason University and director of its International Transactions program.

David Gelernter

"He was used to being hit, but not that hard. That London should come out for the eleventh was more than anybody had the right to ask, but he did. Fifty-one seconds after it opened, Patterson, with a flurry of blows, drove him across the ring towards the side where I sat. The last punch sent London staggering back toward me . . ." This is A.J. Liebling describing, blow-by-blow, how Newt Gingrich ("London") got clobbered by the *New York Times* (aka "Floyd Patterson"). Gingrich has been dazed and loopy since early '96; the conservative majority in Congress is reeling. We know the reason (or one of the big reasons), but tend to forget or discount it because it is so depressing. If a conservative journalist publishes a book that is attacked and lied about in the mainstream press, he is shaken; Gingrich has woken up to vicious reviews every day of his whole career as a national figure. Of course he has friends, but the cultural Establishment doesn't merely oppose prominent and powerful conservatives, it hates them: the *Times* and *Post*, which pass the word to the TV networks, which inspire the local press and TV, and on to the entertainment industry and beyond. Gingrich's friends are okay as far as they go, but they don't run ABC or any remotely comparable institution.

Why are Gingrich and his conservative majority reeling? Because of the first law of post-Vietnam American politics, "conservatives in power always retreat." They are laid low by Hatred-Induced Ideological Unraveling, a disease whose pathetic, punch-drunk endpoint is the state referred to by the press as "newfound receptiveness to compromise." Gingrich during 1995 and Reagan during his first term were important exceptions, but the principle transcends them and transcends politics.

HIIU is an insidious disease that defies logic. Power and success ought to inoculate a person, but they don't. Philip Roth investigates the phenomenon in a 1983 novel (*The Anatomy Lesson*) about his alter-ego, who is a famous big shot at the top of his field—and is so devastated by bad reviews that he wants to quit writing and become a doctor. Safety and comfort don't inoculate you either. Daphne Merkin includes in her new book a peculiar, affecting essay called "Dreaming of Hitler." As a teenaged Jew she found herself meeting Hitler repeatedly in her dreams, arguing him gently out of Jew-hatred. Hitler and the *New York Times* are in every sense incomparable; the point is that, however you batten down your mind, hatred gets in through the cracks. The girl was safe, the Speaker one of the world's most powerful men. But they each dreamt of not being hated.

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Do character and courage inoculate you? Top military leaders are selected for character and courage, but in the aftermath of Tailhook they allowed careers to be wrecked, and training to be reorganized around ideas that any 10-year-old could tell you are wacky and dangerous. (Women trainees can't be relied on to throw hand grenades far enough to avoid getting blown up. Contemplated solution: lighter, less-powerful hand grenades. Today's Army—Beating the Enemy is Job No. 2.) These generals and admirals make Gingrich look steadfast, but I don't believe they are unprinci-

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pled; I do believe that the Establishment's full-throttle hatred feels like jet engine exhaust when you face into it. The leaders of the Citadel and VMI are mostly former military men themselves. The federal government and courts ordered these two schools that revere tradition to eradicate one of their core traditions, which seems like a deliberate humiliation, and in a sense was intended to be. You'd have thought that, wherever it stood on admitting women, the leadership would have refused on principle. You can picture the two schools forswearing all federal funds and appealing to the public to make up the difference until today's craziness subsides. Such an appeal would not have been prudent, but no military school ever had *Prudence!* emblazoned on its crest. HIIU, however, hits hard and is devastating.

Haven't politicians always suffered the relentless hatred of political opponents? Certainly, but prestigious institutions at the top of the culture hierarchy have never been so powerful, unanimous, smug, and scarce. Gingrich failed the conservative intelligentsia but we failed him first, conservatives like me who have no stomach for any such contentious, exhausting prospect as remaking the cultural mainstream. There are some head-on conservatives, and it's no accident that David Horowitz (with his Center for the Study of Popular Culture) is one of the most prominent. He's a former leftist; he has Establishment-fighting genes. If he could distill that combativeness into a bottle, the whole conservative community could use a shot.

Contributing editor David Gelernter is THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s art critic.*

Stanley B. Greenberg

The conservative defeats in the United States, Great Britain, France, and Canada are only bewildering if you begin with the premise that conservative ideas are historically ascendant and a popular guide for modern societies facing new challenges. The premise seems reasonable enough given the triumphs of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the two great English-speaking democracies. That leaders of the center-left parties—like Clinton in the United States, Blair in Britain, Chrétien in Canada, Kok in the Netherlands, and Hawke and Keating in Australia—have been caught stealing conservative rhetoric and policies only buttresses conservatives' confidence in their own ascendancy.

Little wonder then that conservatives have concentrated on tactical explanations for their recent defeats, lamenting the conservative failure to communicate effectively, the flawed conservative communicators, the "dysfunctional relationship" between the conservative movement and "its elected leaders" (Adam Meyerson, *Policy Review*), and the Left's willingness to choose "the most adept, cunning, and unscrupulous candidates" who resort to a "new unpredictability, opportunism, [and] fuzziness" (David Frum, THE WEEKLY STANDARD). In the U.S., all tactical roads lead to the fateful decision to close the federal government—the ultimate tactical disaster that drove ordinary citizens away from the conservatives.

These tactical explanations must be reassuring because they allow conservatives to both acknowledge defeat and sound seriously self-critical, even as they affirm their belief in conservatism's popular hegemony. But finally, THE WEEKLY STANDARD has had the good sense to wonder out loud why the Left always seems so consistently sure-footed and the Right so clumsy.

Grover Norquist tells us in *Policy Review*, "From Ronald Reagan, conservatives have learned optimism and discovered they are on the winning side of history." That is the core problem—the conservative misreading of Reaganism and Thatcherism. Reagan and Thatcher were certainly triumphant at a particular historical moment, but conservatives have concluded that this pair's electoral victories were a triumph of a particular historical course. That conclusion leads to a misreading of both the past and the future.

The conservative victories of the 1980s were a product of the public's disillusionment with the so-called working-class parties and the unreformed welfare state. The electorate was not particularly enthusiastic at first about either Reagan or Thatcher, but this was less about them and their ideas than about the dysfunctionality of the Left. The electorate voted for big changes: to bring the rising prices, interest rates, taxes, and spending under control; to relieve the tax burden on the average citizen; and to push special-interest power to the wings (trade unions in Britain and cultural-liberal groups in the States) and put hard-working families on center stage.

In an important sense, Reaganism and Thatcherism forced the reform of the modern state and of the parties of the left. The successful center-left parties today take as axiomatic that spending cannot run out of control, that the middle-class tax burden must be lessened, and that their parties must be inclusive but

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also broadly representative of the interests and values of the mainstream electorate. Defeat at the hands of Reagan and Thatcher was traumatic, but the struggle also freed many center-left parties to break with past practices and reconnect with their broad working- and middle-class base.

This period of upheaval, however, did not produce public enthusiasm for core conservative ideas such as supply-side economics, deregulation, marketization, business primacy, and indeed, even the idea of cutting major government spending programs. Conservatives pretended that this was not so, or simply elided their critique of social-democratic governance and their own ideas for governing. In the process, they turned a historic episode into history itself.

Conservatives have entered the post-Reagan/Thatcher period confident that the public is predisposed to the core conservative principle, "You're on your own," as Frum articulates it. Accordingly, conservatives across the globe seem prepared to go to the electorate with school vouchers and school choice, capital-gains tax cuts, deregulation of business, privatization of state pensions, and medical savings accounts as alternatives to government-supported health-care programs.

The problem for conservatives is that the public is, at best, unenthusiastic about the specific policies and, at worst, profoundly hostile to the principle. For more and more people today, ours is a time of simultaneous squeeze on economic and family lives. More and more people believe they face a new and uncertain world fundamentally alone, and they are looking for social and governmental support—whether it is a loan for college or assured health care in retirement. The conservative principle, "You're on your own," is little more than a slap in the face.

The conservatives lost on both sides of the Atlantic because voters rejected the idea of an ascendant conservative history. Voters have long acceded to the conservative critique of the earlier, unreformed social-democratic parties and state, but voters have explicitly turned away from conservative ideas as a basis for governance in the future. In nearly all these elections, voters called for a lessening of economic and social inequality, the protection of public spending levels, limits on deregulation, privatization, and marketization, and the defense of health care and retirement systems. In Britain, for example, nearly three-quarters of the new (presumably more conservative) Labour voters wanted wealth redistributed from the better off to the less-well off, taxes and spending for schools increased, and all further privatization brought to an end.

This is not a communication problem. This is not a problem of tactics. In this period of information technology and markets, ordinary citizens are looking for help to support their own best efforts, and they are entertaining the idea that sometimes we need to do things together, even as a nation. Conservatives are losing elections because they are losing a history they never owned.

Stanley B. Greenberg has served as pollster to Bill Clinton, Nelson Mandela, and Tony Blair. He is co-editor with Theda Skocpol of* The New Majority: Toward a Popular Progressive Politics *(Yale University Press, forthcoming).

Yoram Hazony

The fate of conservatism in Israel is the reverse of that in the rest of the West: The newly elected prime minister, Benjamin ("Bibi") Netanyahu, is the closest Israel has ever had to ideologically conservative leadership; Netanyahu supports economic liberalization, lower taxes, peace through strength, a balance of powers between the branches of government, and greater Jewish traditionalism in the public schools.

Yet the ideas for which he stands as a leader are not in the least bit "ascendant" in Israel; indeed, most of these principles enjoy majority support neither in Netanyahu's own Likud party nor in the governing coalition—much less in the country as a whole. Netanyahu is not riding the crest of a surging conservative political movement such as the one that brought Reagan and Thatcher to power; he is, rather, fighting a one-man war against the entire system, while most of his own colleagues strain to keep up with what he is doing.

Why is Bibi waging his battle for a strong, free, and Jewish Israel virtually on his own? The answer lies in the fact that Israel was not founded by Englishmen, as America was; it was founded by *Russians*. And its entire political debate for 70 years has reflected the political disputes of the East: the socialist-flavored nationalism of David Ben-Gurion ("the Right") as against the utopian socialism of A.D. Gordon ("the Left"). When the first non-Russian intellectuals arrived in Jewish Palestine in numbers in the 1930s, they were German-Jewish refugees from Hitler, whose ideological commitments, like those of German-Jew-

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ish refugees arriving in New York at the same time, were not to Jewish nationalism but rather to a kind of humanist-existentialist Novocain—"Give peace a chance, because love is all you need," or something like that. Injected into the body politic in Israel and America, these ideas immensely strengthened the utopian Left in both countries, with very similar results: Within a generation, the Germans had helped foment the peace movement and the social revolutions of the 1960s, which in Israel meant the end of Ben-Gurion and the rise of a utopian socialist oligarchy (when utopian socialism leaves the kibbutz and acquires a bureaucracy, it becomes "social democracy"), which controls virtually every cultural and intellectual institution in the Jewish state to this day.

But unlike in America, Israel's Eastern origins meant that there were no conservatives who could regroup and fight back; the only serious conservative leader among the Zionists, Ze'ev Jabotinsky—a boy from Odessa who somehow managed to educate himself in Italy and von Mises's Vienna, and who later became mentor to Benjamin Netanyahu's father—had been exiled from Palestine by the British in 1930 for sedition because he had advocated a Jewish state; he died in the United States 10 years later. Israel never had William Buckley, Irving Kristol, or Leo Strauss; no one to translate Burke or Hayek into Hebrew; no *Commentary*, no University of Chicago, no Heritage Foundation; and therefore no Ronald Reagan. In Israel, the utopian revolutionaries of the 1960s won their war and just kept going. Except on the single foreign-policy issue of the disposition of the West Bank, Israel has had no major cultural or public-policy debate in 30 years. Judicial activism, the welfare state, moral relativism, the sexual revolution, the corruption of the arts and the decay of academia, the excommunication of religion and the delegitimization of the idea of the nation—in all these, Israel now looks like America or Britain would have looked if the conservative counterattack had never taken place.

This is not to say that Israel does not have parties and social groups that are fundamentally inclined towards conservative ideas without ever having heard them described as such. There are numerous factions representing traditional religion, the last vestiges of a "national camp," and even a handful of libertarians. Moreover, there are large numbers—Sephardim, the religious, women, ethnic minorities—who have been permanently shut out of North Tel Aviv's socialist old-boy network, whose perpetual hold on the means of production is ensured by government-backed cartels.

But fusing these shut-out groups into a movement strong and united enough to break Israel's continual slide past the 1960s and towards disintegration will not be achieved solely through the election of a neo-con prime minister. This was already demonstrated by Menachem Begin's center-right coalition of 1977, whose effect on the country's dominant ideas—as reflected in academia, the media, the educational system, the state's policymaking bureaucracy, and the judiciary—was nil. All of these institutions are more radical today than they were when Begin took office, and the ideas emanating from them are parroted unhesitatingly by politicians of every conceivable stripe. For example, in recent outbursts (there has been no "debate," as such) over the ultra-activism of Israel's Supreme Court—which makes the Warren Court look like a bastion of scrupulous textual analysis—almost the entire Israeli center-Right has jumped to join the farthest Left in defending the prerogatives of the court to overturn the decisions of the executive as it sees fit.

"No man is strong or rich enough to move a people," wrote Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Jewish nationalism. "Only an idea can do that." And without a unifying conservative idea to move the nation to a new and healthier course, Israel's character will continue to be shaped by the self-evident truths of Euro-socialism, moral relativism, and the political correctness of the "enlightened" minority. In its lack of a unifying counter-idea, Israeli conservatism does in fact resemble the conservative movements in the West, which triumphed (prematurely?) over the So-

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viet Union, only to find themselves splintered today into a multitude of cultural, educational, religious, economic, and nationalist elements, unable to remember what they ever had in common. Conservatives have forgotten what Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher understood so well: that conservatism, in all its branches, derives from a single source—*enlightened tradition*—and that one cannot sit on the branch of market capitalism, or that of limited government, or that of religious morality, or that of education in the Jewish and Western classics, without relying on this mighty trunk and the roots that feed it; indeed, that one cannot sit on any of these branches without tacitly recognizing the claims of the others.

In recovering this, its decisive and unifying idea, conservatism can achieve resurgence and strength, in Israel as in the rest of the democratic world.

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Mark Helprin

In a judgment similar to Nasser's assessment of his military standing vis-à-vis Israel in June 1967, the self-opiating branch of conservatism in this country decided, perhaps simultaneously with its discovery of cigars, that it was triumphant, or at least ascendant. But just as Egypt's position was rendered imperfect by Israel's superiority in the air and on the ground, conservative predominance is somewhat flawed by liberal control of the executive, the power of judicial appointment, the press, the academy, publishing, printing, publicity, secondary education, television, and Hollywood. Congress, as of this date still Republican in name, is Republican only by a slim margin that hangs from a slender thread.

If this thread is severed and Democrats regain control, what is left? The conviction that underlying and fundamental forces still favor conservatism and that, as Churchill maintained, "facts are better than dreams." But if they are, why are they in hiding? Is it because superficial forces can be arrayed in such a way as to dominate underlying realities? Indeed they can be in an age where the broad electorate now imitates the intellectuals, and judges not from its own specific experience but from models and conceptions of the fate of abstract others whom it never knows but who, it is told, are always there. Liberals by nature appeal to notions, and conservatives by nature appeal to facts. No examples better illustrate this than John Major's stolid, brain-dead recitation of the facts of the British economy, and Tony Blair's vague, weepy, sometimes almost imbecilic appeals for a better world. Think as well, of course, of Bill Clinton, the man who could corrupt Hadleyburg only because Hadleyburg was already corrupt.

Many explanations exist for the recent eclipse of conservatism as a governing force in the developed world. Modernism itself, abetted by technological powers and attractions, prepares the ground for almost automatic acceptance of liberalism's false promise of redemption by planning and control, and militates without cease against conservatism's central tenet that man is not God. In a time of rapid change, people learn to show disdain for what is not new, and conservatism is based on reverence for the lasting and the eternal. After great struggles and long wars, democracies retire the parties that have led them to victory, and perhaps such a pause after the Cold War of almost half a century is salutary, realistic, and good at least in terms of checking triumphalism and the failure that triumphalism always drags in train. And then, many of the "facts" that were set to battle against dreams turned out to have been notably unfactual, such as the widely uttered assertion that with higher taxation and more regulation the economy would weaken. It didn't.

Which is not to say that it won't, for it will, because facts are better than dreams and in the long term always prevail. The nation will eventually pay with interest for every moment of Bill Clinton's unseemly enjoyment of office. It will pay on the battlefield in the bodies of the dead; it will pay in its obsession with class and race; it will pay in hospital rooms, in the schools, and in the structures that fail as standards fall. And then it will rush temporarily to conservative principles.

Nonetheless, reliance upon the cycles of history brings failure if only because political parties can amend or break these cycles either by rising to power when their turn has yet to come, or by failing to rise at the moment they are called for. If a party does not insist upon more than what is due to it naturally, then it will miss so many opportunities that it will die. It cannot simply rely upon the tides, it must swim sometimes furiously with them and sometimes furiously against them.

To do so, it needs above all what the British, French, and American parties of the right now lack—party discipline and a leader who lights his own way. Without the recognition of its adherents that they

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cannot always get exactly what they want, no political party can succeed except by raw accident or unctuous fraud. Conservatives are supposed to lean toward probity, discipline, and self-sacrifice. Would that they showed it enough to outshine the once disparate factions of the Democratic party that now keep a united front. And as for the leader who lights his own way, he must have just the right combination of genius, courage, and luck. He must know who he is, and what he believes. And he must not be afraid to lose.

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Josef Joffe

From Beijing to Cambridge, Massachusetts, they now genuflect before the altar of capitalism, and everybody but Cuba and North Korea at least pretends that liberal democracy is his god. But then, the priests of the old faith go on to win the elections in the West. To Clinton, Blair, and Jospin, add a name you should learn how to spell: Gerhard Schröder. A rabid leftie in his youth, this Social Democratic prime minister of Lower Saxony will most likely win the German elections in 1998, ending the 16-year streak of Christian Democratic chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The smell of victory was in the air when Schröder suddenly discovered the "crime issue," riling his leftish brethren with a classic conservative slogan: We've got to get tough on those foreign criminals; never mind due process, let's kick 'em out as soon as we catch 'em. Of course, he also believes in lower taxes, less regulation, and more hard work.

Sound like Ronald Reagan? No, like Bill Clinton and Tony Blair (forget Jospin and the ornery French; they will always head into one-way streets the wrong way). The bible of post-Reagan social democracy was written by Bill Clinton during the Democratic convention in Chicago. Listen to the sounds of '96. Over here is Bill Clinton preaching fiscal probity, family values, and lock-'em-up justice. "We're putting 100,000 police on the streets, and we've made three strikes and you're out the law of the land. . . . The era of big government is over. . . . The deficit has come down for four years in a row." Culturally, Clinton then moved to the right of George Bush. He proposed school uniforms and curfews for teens. No more "self-esteem" instead of hard work. Teachers "who don't measure up" should be "removed."

But wait! Over there is Bill Clinton, a man of the old Left in a hipper garb. This was the Clinton who promised a do-it-all government. Who wanted the feds to teach third-graders how to read. Who preached national health insurance and the "integrity of our pensions," i.e., more government largess. This was not middle-of-the-road mush. This was the first postmodern president speaking—a man who is left and right. Call him the Son of the White Queen, who told Alice that she could "believe as many as six impossible things before breakfast." This is how Tony Blair won, and how Gerhard Schröder will win.

The old way of winning was to secure a base on your side of the ideological spectrum and then push forward just beyond the center. The postmodern way of the Left is to plant two flags, well apart on either side of the divide. While placating his party's left with some of the old verities, Clinton has thrust deep into Republican territory. For good measure, he has also garrisoned the center by holding out lavish middle-class entitlements like tuition tax credits and "tax cuts for homeownership."

This leaves the Republicans with no place to go. Unable to outflank Clinton on the left, they are stuck on the right with less turf. Which raises a baffling question: Why does the electorate go for the neo-Left's you-can-have-it-all strategy?

Call it the "Winnie-the-Pooh Syndrome." When

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the bear was asked whether he wanted honey or jam on his bread, he replied, "I'll have both . . . but I won't take the bread." Meet the postmodern voter. The electorate has "deconstructed." Those who used to heed the call of class, religion, or ethnicity have become nimble-footed shoppers in the market of political goodies. Like Pooh, the voter wants it both: the rightish jam and the leftish honey.

In the old days, candidates had to harness coalitions clustered around an ideological common denominator. Today, the trick is to assemble an election-winning basket of incongruous political goods: pot roast and croissants, Drano and Chardonnay, salsa and Wonder Bread. This is why Clinton's Chicago speech read like a presidential tour through the local supermarket. And this is why the Republicans have been playing the panting hare to Bill Clinton's laid-back tortoise. Dashing to and fro, the frustrated rabbit regularly discovers that Smilin' Bill is already there.

It has worked in the United States and in Britain, and it will also work in Germany in '98. True-blue Thatcherism is not a winner anymore, as Trent Lott has learned faster than Newt Gingrich. Pooh wants it all, and the White Queen rules.

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Michael S. Joyce

This exchange took place in a *Firing Line* debate on the merits of school choice, aired on national television on June 20. The participants are William Curry, counselor to President Clinton, and Brother Bob Smith, principal of a private, faith-based high school in Milwaukee's inner city:

> CURRY: Show me a school system where all the parents are in the top percentile of income, and I'll show you a bunch of kids who, by and large, are on their way to Harvard. Show me a school system whose parents are in the bottom percentile of income, and I'll show you a bunch of kids on their way to jail. . . .
>
> SMITH: . . . I take offense at that, and the 50 graduates from my high school last Saturday take offense at that. Of those 50 graduates, 95 percent are African American and Hispanic, 70 percent low income, 70 percent single-parent family. They're not on their way to prison. They are on the way to colleges around this country.

As we watch Curry's slow pitch down the middle leave Brother Bob's bat and begin its journey into the left-field bleachers, we should be able to remember why conservatism triumphed over liberalism in the first place. In the '60s and '70s, liberalism began to treat everyday American institutions and values with contempt. Americans came to be viewed not as self-governing citizens rooted in families, neighborhoods, churches, and schools, but as abstract categories of race, gender, and class, to be manipulated at will by bureaucrats and experts in pursuit of abstract and utopian schemes for human improvement—establishing perfect equality, creating a family-like national community, restoring a pristine environment, unleashing self-expression.

When this contempt became apparent to Americans, they, too, took offense. Ronald Reagan spoke for them when he called for a repudiation of manipulative bureaucratic utopianism and a "return to the human scale—the scale of the local fraternal lodge, the church organization, the block club, the farm bureau." Family, neighborhood, work, peace, freedom—these were the commitments that propelled conservatism to a decade of ascendancy. With President Reagan, Brother Bob Smith's accomplishment at Messmer would never have been dismissed in a flurry of abstract categorization. Instead, he would have been held up as one of the "everyday heroes" who had built an America of proud, free, self-governing citizens—a shining city on a hill.

Conservatism today appears to have lost its rootedness in the everyday concerns and values of American citizens. To voters, it now seems caught up in abstract, utopian schemes of its own—unleashing the free market, ushering in "third wave" technocracy, legislating a new national moral order.

Meanwhile, liberals have found a president who is comfortable with and can speak for America's families, neighborhoods, and churches. Providing portable phones for neighborhood-watch groups—a quintessentially Reaganesque flourish by Clinton en route to reelection—is the perfect symbol for the New Democrat, in touch with everyday citizens trying to restore order on their streets. (Tony Blair—more comfortable with religious tradition than with trade unionism's rigid Marxism—similarly resuscitated liberalism in Britain.)

But American citizens today, especially parents, are still manifestly dissatisfied with schools that don't teach, streets that aren't safe, social services that don't

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serve, and a culture that undermines character, all because the institutions of liberalism remain intact even as their utopian rationale has been repudiated. If conservatism can once again speak compellingly for those concerns—if it can convince Americans that it still trusts everyday citizens to run their own schools, neighborhoods, and communities without expert bureaucratic "help"—it will regain its momentum.

This time, though, conservatism must reach beyond its traditional base in the suburban middle class and summon to its banner grass-roots, neighborhood leaders like Brother Bob Smith, who continue to experience firsthand the contempt of liberalism and who have managed to build shining cities on otherwise dismal hills without adequate attention or assistance from conservatism. This new coalition can be constructed beginning today, without electing a president or passing a law. All it takes is conservative businessmen, philanthropists, and volunteers who are willing to seek out the Brother Bobs in their own communities and support them with contributions of time, money, and friendship. Conservative elected leadership could help by turning their own offices into civic switchboards, ensuring that these non-traditional connections are made.

This would be the making of a new conservative majority—one that reaches across the racial and cultural divides that liberalism continues to emphasize and exacerbate—a majority united in the faith that, beneath our differences, we are all self-governing citizens of a republic committed to the notion that, here, the people rule.

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Charles R. Kesler

In America, at least, conservatives have always been more confident of what they were against than what they were *for*. Accordingly, the collapse of Soviet communism left them at once proud and perplexed. American conservatives' long and noble resistance to the Soviet empire had always had about it, in part, the Romantic air of devotion to a lost cause, expressed most movingly in Whittaker Chambers's historical pessimism. When the Iron Curtain suddenly fell, the

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pessimists were nonplussed: They had never expected to win, and certainly not like that.

Enter the optimists. Led by Newt Gingrich, and buoyed by the West's impressive, high-tech victory in the Persian Gulf War, they preached the gospel of the Third Wave, the good news that the future belonged to free enterprise on a worldwide scale, to the irrepressible, liberating, decentralizing effects of markets and technology. History was on conservatism's side, they proclaimed confidently. The remarkable defeat of the Clinton health-care plan seemed to confirm their prophecy, especially when in 1994 the Republicans broke the Democrats' 40-year lock on the House of Representatives. Speaker Gingrich set out to govern as if Republican realignment were already in hand, emulating FDR's Hundred Days even as he declared the New Deal obsolete.

But when the Republican agenda bogged down in the House and Senate, and President Clinton handily won reelection in 1996, the conservative futurists were dismayed. The Third Wave had left them stranded on a sandbar, instead of carrying them safely ashore. Like the economic determinists of the former Soviet Union, they did not know whither to turn when the future failed them.

The problem is not that conservatives have run out of dragons to slay, nor that they are reluctant to make common cause. American conservatives fought shoulder-to-shoulder against the Clinton health-care plan, remember. The problem is that, while the galvanizing effect of having the same enemies is indispens-

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able, it is not enough. To win enduring political victories, and especially to win transforming political victories, conservatives have to arrive at a clearer idea of what they stand *for*, and why they stand for it. Gingrich saw this, in his own peculiar way, and tried to transform the Republicans' victory against socialist health care into a positive agenda. The Contract With America, however, was merely a jumble of popular policy prescriptions, and Gingrich's fervent belief in "the future" was hardly a justifying principle for the Republican party. The Democrats are better at that sort of thing, and in the end the aging baby boomers in the American electorate soberly decided that they would prefer to build a bridge, rather than catch a wave, to the future, that land of infinite and easy promises.

So, in America, conservatives seem stigmatized, at least temporarily, with the worst of libertarianism (the much maligned government "shutdown"), the worst of traditionalism (holier-than-thou moralizing), and the worst of Republicanism (the party of the rich, of the "economic royalists," to use that hoary but still potent phrase). These are slanders, of course, but they are made believable by conservatives' own lack of an account of themselves—a lack that neither historical optimism nor pessimism can supply.

Here we bump up against a general cause of conservative discontents, one not peculiar to America. One reason why parties of the left have bounced back recently in Italy, France, Great Britain, and the United States is that politics remains a game played mostly on the Left's home field and by its rules. The Left has been down, but never out, in these countries. Or to put it more concretely, the centralized welfare and administrative state, the Left's great institutional bulwark, persists everywhere (in various national manifestations, to be sure) under liberal and conservative governments alike. Although Bill Clinton and Tony Blair may indeed have to be more "centrist" now than they might like—due to the lingering influence of Ronald Reagan's and Margaret Thatcher's huge political achievements—it is also true that Reagan and Thatcher were constrained to govern much farther to the left than they would have liked. Neither Reagan nor Thatcher managed to dismantle or devolve much of Big Government.

What is to be done about the centralized welfare and administrative state is a massive, though politically delicate, problem that confronts conservatives worldwide. In most (perhaps in all) of these countries, the Right has had a hand in building this new state (think Disraeli, Bismarck, Adenauer, Nixon); but its regular effects skew the economic, political, and moral debate powerfully towards the left. So daunting is the problem that it induces a certain paralysis not only of the will, but of the intellect itself, in conservative politicians around the globe. Yet it is an urgent concern, and not merely or even mainly from the standpoint of balancing national budgets: In virtually every Western nation, the state apparatus has so centralized political authority that increasing numbers of its own citizens are alienated from political life.

If anyone will come to grips with this problem, it will be American conservatives. Already they have made breakthroughs intellectually—and even politically, here and there; but the main contests lie ahead. In preparing for them, conservatives ought to recall one of Ronald Reagan's enduring lessons. In both victory and defeat, Reagan showed that in order for conservative policies to succeed, they must be anchored in a heroic view of America and its mission. Reagan's words and deeds helped to revive the moral attractiveness of entrepreneurs and businessmen, of soldiers and patriots, of churchgoers and charitable volunteers alike. By reminding us that American citizenship can be a heroic calling, that it was animated by principles worth living and even dying *for*, he pointed the way out of the conservative doldrums and back to some of the deepest sources of conservative inspiration and authority: the principles of the America that existed before the modern state, the principles of the American founding.

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Everett Carll Ladd

To answer the question posed for this symposium, we need to understand the huge shift in public sentiment that from the late 1970s on has given conservative ideas an ascendancy that had not been theirs in the preceding half century. Americans (and from vastly different traditions, citizens of many other nations, too) did not turn against government. But in growing majorities they did come to reject the New Deal/Great Society view that "more government is the solution." The latter idea had defined politics around the globe in the first three quarters of our century; its rejection has redefined the politics of the last quarter century and will continue to do so well into the next.

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But as momentous as this ideological revolution is, it doesn't give conservatives clear sailing. Many government-provided services and guarantees are genuinely valued. Others, while viewed critically, still draw support as a last resort. Much of the public says, in effect: "If you can't show us how you will accomplish the goal by other means, we will resist efforts to curb government's role." Here in the United States, where the ideological climate is still remarkably more favorable to their case than in other industrial democracies, many conservatives have found it hard to formulate and present a coherent, positive vision of a less government-centered society. Of course, making this case isn't easy—which is why Ronald Reagans and Margaret Thatchers (and their successful counterparts on other points of the ideological compass) have always been in short supply.

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In the United States, rejection of the idea that more government is progress has been accompanied by an equally profound shift on so-called social issues, ranging from crime and drugs, to the status of the family, to the place of religion and morality. Having swung far from historical norms in the three decades following World War II, Americans have in the last 25 years again changed course, this time in a conservative direction. Without retreating from our founding commitment to individual choice, we've come to a renewed appreciation that a society which gives wide scope to claims of individuals' rights must insist strongly on individuals' responsibilities.

For many of us, this restoration seems painfully slow. But it is in fact proceeding—as witnessed by the explosive growth of conservative religious groups that emphasize individual responsibility, by a heightened commitment to toughness in dealing with crime (now showing results in declining crime rates), by the renewed emphasis on voluntarism and community service, and a sharper appreciation of the primary, irreplaceable role of the family in nurturing confidently responsible individuals.

Here again, though, as on role-of-government issues, finding the right voice on matters of personal social responsibility isn't easy. Most Americans continue to give wide scope to individual choice—believing that people must ultimately find their own way. They applaud vigorous efforts to raise personal standards and expectations, but they are uncomfortable with "holier than thou" posturing and in many areas—though certainly not crime—heavy governmental intervention.

Today's America is a pretty conservative place—so, yes, it *is* frustrating that those of us on the conservative side haven't done better in speaking broadly and positively to these impulses. But while understandable, this frustration has too often given way to a spirit of negativism, of whining and complaining, that is enormously counterproductive. We have had more than two centuries of experience as an independent nation, demonstrating that stressing the negative is almost always a loser with the general public—though not with certain elites—and that constructive optimism is usually a winner. All of our most successful public officials—even Lincoln facing the crisis of slavery and civil war—have pointed the way up, rather than despaired over the difficulties.

Conservatives need to understand their country better and have more confidence in it. The present philosophical climate in the United States is broadly supportive of forms of conservatism rooted in our egalitarian and optimistic tradition. Finding the right leadership and voice to respond to it is hard, and we will often fail. But if we can't appreciate the advances of the last 25 years, we are in no position to lead constructively. And if we can't offer a positive vision for greater progress in the next 25, we will be squandering a rare opportunity.

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Leslie Lenkowsky

The disarray in which conservatives find themselves these days ultimately grows out of their triumphs in political ideas and energy.

For most of this century, collectivist liberals have proposed and conservatives disposed. Left-of-center governments in countries like the United States and Britain have put forth programs to expand the public sector's role in managing the economy, providing social services and income support, and regulating business. The right-of-center leaders that followed—one thinks of Eisenhower and Macmillan in the 1950s, or Nixon and Heath in the 1970s—more or less accepted what their predecessors had initiated, and even built upon it. Liberals won power by offering bold new ideas for change. Conservatives won by promising to maintain course and improve upon it, albeit more slowly.

Since the 1980s, however, the political roles have been reversed. Now conservatives are the party that proposes, liberals the one that disposes. Right-of-center governments offer ambitious programs to reduce the public sector's involvement in the economy, foster self-reliance instead of dependency, and stimulate entrepreneurs and venture capitalists. Left-of-center parties either try to go along, preserving as much of their earlier handiwork as possible, or, if they try to revive the old-time religion—as President Clinton did with his health-care plan, and the pre-Blair Labour party did in opposing Thatcherism—meet with political disaster. Liberals are better off when they stand for nothing, or at least as few of their traditional positions as possible.

For conservatives, this switch is one they have long sought. It reflects the rightward movement of political thinking and allegiances in countries that have spent most of the 20th century embracing activist government. But it is also a shift fraught with hazards, which conservatives have yet to figure out how to overcome.

One is the ability of liberals to appropriate conservative ideas for their own purposes. Just as right-of-center parties once did to them, liberals have proven remarkably adept at stealing conservative clothes and using them to dress fundamentally unconservative policies. The debate over balancing the budget offers one example, creating educational standards another. Conservatives invoke tax-cutting to increase economic incentives; liberals do so to promote behavior they prefer (such as going to college). Favoring the principle, but not its putative application, is a sure way to appear confused, if not hypocritical. And a hard way to maintain a political coalition.

Setting the agenda is also riskier than reacting to it. In the past, conservatives were able to identify issues or interests likely to be harmed by liberal proposals and recruit allies by mobilizing opposition to them. Today, liberals have that advantage. When conservatives suggest that tort reform would be a good idea, liberals can now ask about all those widows and orphans who might be left vulnerable to unscrupulous securities dealers. If the Right proposes vouchers as a way of increasing educational opportunities for inner-city youngsters, the Left need not be above pointing out, apropos of those same youngsters, the possibility that *they* may start enrolling in suburban schools. To be sure, such objections are often apt to be exaggerated, or can be fixed without much difficulty. But liberals in opposition have no duty to help conservatives in power look good or advance their causes, any more than conservatives did when the roles were reversed.

Conservatives worldwide are in a peculiar state. On the one hand, their ideas seem to be ascendant; on the other hand, the parties and politicians that represent them seem to be getting battered. Clinton, Blair, and Jospin are victorious, while politicians allied with what we think of as "conservative" ideas about the free market, regulation, the size of government, and traditional morality are reeling from defeat after defeat. In the United States, the Republican Congress has lost its moorings in the wake of Bill Clinton's reelection. What's going on? What does it mean? What happened to the confident conservatism of Thatcher, Reagan, and the 1994 Republican congressional victory?

Finally, there's the matter of the agenda itself. Despite sometimes major differences in the specifics, liberals rarely had any difficulty agreeing on what they wanted government to do: more. And they were adept at conjuring up visions of "new deals" and "great societies" that conveyed an appealing, if unrealistic and impossible picture of what would result. By contrast, conservatives are generally united by a negative idea—that government should do less—and their images of what they hope to establish, a "civil society"

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or an "opportunity society," are often heavier on rhetoric than content. The failures of the liberal idea helped conservatives gain influence. However, conservatism's failure to develop and articulate its own vision of what the public sector should do undermines its ability to govern.

With the triumph of conservative ideas, in short, has come a rise in expectations for conservative political leaders. Too many are having difficulty living up to them. If that continues to be the case, they will not be leaders for long, and conservatism's reign will be brief indeed.

Leslie Lenkowsky is president of the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Tod Lindberg

I was in Moscow in June for the first time in seven years, and, naturally, I visited the Kremlin again. In 1990, even in the age of glasnost and perestroika, the Kremlin was still the forbidding world headquarters of Evil Empire & Sons—the gray, nuclear-tipped Soviet Union. In 1997, though, as I was strolling past a smiling Kremlin policeman directing tourists along the pathway to the Tsar Cannon, I found myself thinking cheerily, *Nice palace*.

That's another way of saying that, in considering the fortunes of conservatives, a little perspective is necessary. The bear is gone, Europe is free, command economies are no longer deemed a development model, and everybody likes markets, because everybody wants to make a buck—including the old nomenklatura, now d/b/a. Nomenklatura, Inc.

But THE WEEKLY STANDARD is right: Conservatives are in something of a funk, both here and abroad. I am dubious about global generalizations, since in my experience they tend to be a product less of observation than of the ideological predisposition of the person doing the generalizing. I'm not sure how much the current malaise in conservative Washington has in common with the conservative malaise in Britain or France or Canada. I put the question the other day to a young Brit serving in the "reinventing government" ministry (yes, they've got one) of Tony Blair's Labour government. He was in town to meet with Al Gore's reinventing-government blokes. He declined the opportunity I offered to describe his party's political fortunes as a manifestation of a global trend sweeping back the benighted forces of conservatism. He talked instead about Labour's having thrown off its old-time socialism and embraced the market economy.

With defeats like these, who needs victory?

But conservatives, myself included, want more—much more. In fact, we've spent years thinking about and refining our to-do list, and it's a long one. And that takes us to the heart of the conservative malaise I do feel qualified to comment on, the Washington malaise. It has two main components, one a product of circumstance, the other structural.

First, circumstance. The Dow breaks through 8000, the economy is growing at 6 percent, unemployment is under 5 percent, there is no inflation, and the federal budget is just about balancing itself. Everywhere you look, it's peace and prosperity. Oh yeah, and people are getting off welfare and finding jobs, the crime rate is down, and test scores at school are edging up.

Of course we're depressed.

There is no urgency to the conservative agenda, alas, just at the time the thrill of the big conservative victory of 1994 has fully dissipated. "Unless we cut marginal tax rates at once, the economy will grow at only *5 percent a year*"? God help us. It is, let's face it, much easier to demand reform (to say nothing of Revolution) in bad times than in good.

The defenders of the status quo just aren't very defensive these days. Worse, people have tuned out politics, preferring, instead, to spend their time checking the balance in their 401(k)s. Those trying to force-feed them—the reformers—run the risk of merely antagonizing them.

The structural problem is that conservatism, rather than merely theorizing about governance, must now govern. To be sure, conservatism in the Reagan era had some experience in wielding power. But the executive branch is not the legislative branch. Enforcing the law is different from making it. And for all the standard analysis that holds that Ronald Reagan had a de facto congressional majority in his first term, there is a world of difference between being able to garner 218 votes in the House of Representatives on particular issues and actually running the place. As Republicans are learning.

Especially for those of a theoretical (or ideological) bent, the transition to governing has been a difficult one. It is not easy to turn an argument into law. Conservatives miss the first year of the 104th Congress not only because they miss the adrenaline jag of recent electoral triumph but also because it was the year of ideology on the march. It *seemed as if* translating con-

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servative ideas into law was not difficult. That's what the House and Senate were doing. Only later, when the enterprise crashed on the rocks of the government shutdown, did it become clear how hard governing really is.

I think that's where we are now—learning how hard governing is. It's not pleasant, but it's necessary, unless we are content to let conservatism remain mere theory.

Tod Lindberg is editorial-page editor of the **Washington Times.**

Seymour Martin Lipset

To understand why "conservative" parties lose elections when conservative anti-statist libertarian ideas seem to be flourishing is simple. The answer is the same as to the question why left parties lost in some post-World War II contests when statist social-democratic doctrines seemed to be dominant. From the late '40s through the '70s, right-of-center parties like the Republicans, the British and Canadian Conservatives, and various European Christian Democratic parties accepted the expanded welfare-planning state. Harold Macmillan, Conservative prime minister of Britain, defined Toryism as "paternalistic socialism." The first de Gaulle government was responsible for considerable nationalization of industry and enlarged welfare programs. Dwight Eisenhower implicitly endorsed the Roosevelt-Truman policies. He appointed Earl Warren as chief justice of the Supreme Court. Richard Nixon tried to move American social-economic policy to the left, by means including wage and price controls, affirmative action, and expansion of the welfare state. He proclaimed: "We are all Keynesians now." Hence voters had to choose among different statist programs. Seeking moderation, they elected slightly liberal, nominally right-of-center parties.

More recently, popular sentiment has moved in an anti-statist direction as reflected in the support for Reagan and Thatcher. And around the developed world, the left-of-center parties, the Democrats and the Social Democrats, have moved to the right. The policies of the Australian, New Zealand, and Spanish social-democratic or labor governments in the '80s and early '90s have been described as "Thatcherite." They and Socialist governments in France and Sweden privatized publicly owned industries. Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, the current leaders of the democratic Left, have proclaimed that "the era of big government is over." Clinton reduced the federal deficit and approved cutting back on welfare. John Kasich has noted approvingly that Clinton has been acting like a Republican. A Labour election manifesto promised that a Blair government would retain the "main elements" of Thatcher's labor legislation and would resist unreasonable demands by unions. During the campaign, Blair said that, in office, he would "leave British law the most restrictive on trade unionism in the Western world." And after taking power in May, he reduced welfare payments, replacing them with workfare. The Labour budget has dropped corporate taxes to the lowest level in the Western world. Baroness Thatcher's prediction, in a pre-election conversation with the journalist Peter Stothard, that "Britain will be safe in the hands of Mr. Blair" has proven accurate.

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Sophisticated affirmations of capitalism and the free market may be found in the speeches and actions of Democratic and Social Democratic leaders. Robert Hawke, Labour prime minister of Australia during the '80s and early '90s, argued that to foster full employment, Social Democrats must understand that profits, savings, and dividends, rather than high wages and taxes, produce economic growth. He stressed that "the move in the share of the national income from

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wages toward profits . . . has enabled us to grow." And he boasted that an "accord" with the trade unions had resulted in reducing real wages by at least 1 percent in each of the eight years during which he was head of government. The Labour prime minister of New Zealand in the same period emphasized that "social democrats must accept the existence of economic inequality because it is the engine which drives the economy." Both reduced welfare payments and taxes.

The Swedish welfare-state model, once the ideal of the democratic Left, was modified by the Social Democrats after they returned to office in 1982 and in 1994. They dropped their steady wage growth and high income-tax policies and undertook several privatization measures as well. The Social Democratic finance minister, Kjell-Olof Feldt, emphasized the need for "accepting private ownership, the profit motive and differences of income and wealth." Writing in his party's theoretical organ, Feldt stated: "The market economy's facility for change and development and therefore economic growth has done more to eliminate poverty, and the exploitation of the working class," than state efforts to redistribute income. A document recently issued by the Danish Ministry for Development Cooperation headed by a Social Democrat proclaims: "The virtue of a market economy, and its superiority over other types of social and political arrangements," is that it "is democratic, as it offers a chance to all, and libertarian, as it promotes the free determination of the person."

Three-term Socialist prime minister of Spain Felipe González used a near-Churchillian formulation to note that "capitalism is the least-bad economic system in existence." And in 1995, the most recent candidate for chancellor of the Social Democratic party of Germany, Rudolf Scharping, announced that his party's historic assumptions had been proven to be "wrong." He noted: "We Social Democrats created an overly regulated, overly bureaucratic, and overly professional welfare state." He criticized the social-security system, which, by undermining the emphasis on work, eroded "the values which our society urgently needs." The Labor-led Dutch government, now hailed as the new social-democratic model, with the lowest unemployment on the continent, has held down wages (unions have agreed not to ask for more than a 2 percent increase) and tightened welfare and sickness benefits.

Free-market—conservative, if you will—ideas and policies have triumphed. And when faced with two parties that do not differ much, the electorate waffles, sometimes dividing government power between them as in the United States, Germany, and France (in that last case, both parties retain the national statist ethos), or turning incumbents out of office, as in Australia, Austria, Britain, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, and Sweden. The pendulum has swung to the right *within* social-democratic and conservative parties, making it difficult for the voters to choose between them on ideological or doctrinal grounds.

Seymour Martin Lipset is a professor of public policy at George Mason University and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. His most recent book is* American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword *(Norton).

Mike Murphy

Conservative parties are getting clobbered because we have lost the courage to be unfashionable. Instead we have become slaves to fashion. We chase "soccer moms" with dumb focus groups about "flex hours" that only document our mindlessness. A new class of Washington-bred cigar-and-martini bimbos show up on television offering brain-dead "analysis" while the network Barnums who put them there laugh themselves silly contemplating what the freak show might do for the ratings: "Beautiful . . . *but Buchananite*."

No wonder our own base voters are beginning to hate us.

Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher had the courage to be unfashionable. Each took a set of ideas that were condemned as simplistic and stupid by the chattering class and advocated them without shame or apology. We lose because most of our leadership lacks that courage. Washington has become our comfortable home. We want our enemies to like us. We try to be "good Germans."

What to do? First, fire the pollsters. Then trigger a gigantic political earthquake by abolishing the federal tax code. Shatter our day-dreaming political climate with a huge national brawl over who should pay what to Washington. Our country needs a big issue to give politics meaning. Our party needs a crisis to help us rediscover our authentic voice, and to force the weak knees in other parties to stand for their historical principles instead of cynically aping ours. Most of all, Republicans need a big battle over core principles to give us purpose.

Otherwise, it will be more of the same. Ineffectual

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squabbling. And since we are conservatives, it is our strange nature to battle most happily in public, wounding one another, since we lack that special principle of Democratic centralism that has helped the Left hold political power from the old Kremlin to the "new" Democrats.

So let's abolish the tax code, create a big national issue, and invite the whole country to participate. This time, we'll win.

Mike Murphy is a GOP media consultant.

Grover Norquist

Britain's Tory leader John Major raised taxes on the British people 22 times and was rejected by the voters. Jacques Chirac's first act as French president was to raise the VAT by 10 percent. This, with George Bush's truncated career, confirms that tax increases are the one unforgivable act of a conservative government.

Now, in the United States are conservatives "reeling from defeat after defeat"? Well, let's look at the present situation: Republicans control both houses of Congress for the first time since 1955; 32 governors representing 75 percent of Americans are Republicans; since Clinton's election in 1992, 319 elected Democrats have switched to the GOP; and Republicans have 51 percent of all state legislators outside the South. Republican mayors are running Los Angeles, New York City, and Jersey City.

Congress is now passing its first net tax cut since Reagan's in 1981. Welfare and agriculture subsidies have been ended as entitlements. In 31 states "shall issue" concealed-carry laws have been passed. Free trade with China withstood attack, union membership has declined to new lows, and deregulation is inevitable in electric power and banking. Internationally, social-security systems are being privatized in Chile, El Salvador, and soon in New Zealand, and tariffs are falling.

Conservative angst flows from two sources.

First, old tried-and-true "wedge" issues that used to guarantee Republican advantage have been lost or weakened. Our victory over Soviet imperialism made the election of a draft dodger possible. Democrats can no longer be counted on to oppose the death penalty, prison for criminals, and a strong defense. Democrats now claim to support a balanced budget, and vulnerable Democrats vote for a constitutional amendment to require one. This is called winning. Ten years ago a person who said socialism was a failed economic system, the Soviet Union was an evil empire, murderers should be executed, criminals imprisoned, and the budget balanced was considered a right-winger. Now that describes the average American.

We knew how to beat old Democrats. Now we must create, strengthen, or simply recognize new wedge issues that divide Americans 70-30 with Democrats holding the "fuzzy end of the lollipop." Cheerfully, an arsenal of new issues is at hand. School choice enjoys 70 percent support and reaches deep into black and Hispanic communities. Democrats are forced to stand in the schoolhouse door, refusing to let children out in order to please their teachers' union paymasters. Tort reform pits every American against 70,000 trial lawyers/DNC donors. Abolishing race and gender preferences and quotas has 80 percent support among whites and blacks and leaves Clinton and his demagogues isolated. Banning partial-birth abortions unites all Republicans and divides Democrats from the radical feminists, who, with 7 percent of the population, demand Democrats vote in support of this "procedure." Abolishing the capital-gains tax and the death tax unites the small businessman, farmer, homeowner, and Chamber of Commerce constituency and forces Democrats to resort to class warfare. Demanding the deployment of strategic defenses against ballistic missiles recreates the GOP pro-defense coalition and puts the Democrats back into their position of weakness on defense issues.

Other possible "wedge" issues present themselves. Louisiana just passed the "covenant marriage" that offers an alternative marriage contract that is more difficult to enter into or divorce out of. This could be introduced in all 50 states come January and create a women's issue the feminists won't touch. Legislation making adoption, including transracial adoption, easier; allowing consumers to opt out of paying for "pain and suffering" through lower-cost auto-choice insurance; cutting back on foreign aid and payments to the United Nations—all recommend themselves as popular conservative positions that divide the Democrats.

The second source of conservative frustration stems from Bill Clinton's veto and the narrow Republican majorities in the House and Senate. We cannot move forward on significant tax cuts, real entitlement reform, or many of the issues listed above as long as Bill Clinton is in the White House with the veto pen. For many victories we must wait until 2001 and a new president. This is frustrating. Conservatives of good

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heart lose patience and begin to gnaw on one another rather than use the forced wait as a time for training, institution-building, fund-raising, and cadre-building. In the Second World War, as the Allies prepared for the Normandy invasion, the troops in Britain had a great deal of time. Smart leaders filled the time with training, practice, and logistical support. Anxious men with too much time on their hands and too little to do tend to drink too much and beat on one another. Conservative leaders must help direct such energy into useful movement-building and issue-education campaigns.

Our June 6, 1944, comes in January 2001.

No prisoners.

Grover Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform.

James Piereson

While it is true that conservatives in the Congress seem to have lost their way in recent months, it is well to remember that their confusion is more the consequence of success than of failure.

The United States is today near its historical peak in terms of its power and influence around the world and the strength of its domestic economy. The Soviet Union is gone, and socialism has been discredited as a means of organizing the political economy of the modern nation state. The United States has inherited the role of world leader and, uniquely in world history, it is generally seen as a benign superpower without ambitions for expansion and conquest. Poor nations look to the United States as a model for political democracy and economic development, and even the Europeans, bound up by their own inefficient welfare states, look enviously upon the strength and flexibility of the American economy. Meanwhile, our unemployment and inflation rates are lower than they have been in a generation, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average has broken 8000, a level that would have been regarded as unreachable just a few years ago.

This unprecedented combination of peace and probity is largely the result of conservative ideas that were put into practice during the eight-year administration of Ronald Reagan. These policies—cutting taxes, reducing the role of government in society, encouraging business enterprise, and confronting the Soviet Union—set the United States on an untested path ("a riverboat gamble" Sen. Howard Baker called part of it), and the success of these policies is mainly responsible for the benign state of affairs we enjoy today. Presidents Bush and Clinton, despite their efforts to modify or undo these policies, have in the end reluctantly confirmed and consolidated the general course that President Reagan embarked on in 1981. The congressional elections of 1994 further solidified the conservative approach by punishing Clinton for his initial efforts to reverse it. Once he accepted the irreversibility of Reagan's legacy, the country prospered, along with Clinton's own political fortunes.

Conservatives worldwide are in a peculiar state. On the one hand, their ideas seem to be ascendant; on the other hand, the parties and politicians that represent them seem to be getting battered. Clinton, Blair, and Jospin are victorious, while politicians allied with what we think of as "conservative" ideas about the free market, regulation, the size of government, and traditional morality are reeling from defeat after defeat. In the United States, the Republican Congress has lost its moorings in the wake of Bill Clinton's reelection. What's going on? What does it mean? What happened to the confident conservatism of Thatcher, Reagan, and the 1994 Republican congressional victory?

The general direction of national affairs set in motion by President Reagan is, moreover, likely to continue for some time into the future. The unwillingness of voters to pay more taxes, combined with the growing burdens of current entitlement programs, has squeezed government resources to the point where Democrats can no longer play their traditional game of building electoral coalitions through the creation of large federal programs.

Mayors and governors around the nation, who formerly came to Washington in search of funds, will have little choice but to encourage business enterprise as a means of expanding tax revenues. The political dynamic that sustained the Democrats from the 1930s to the 1980s is thus in the process of unwinding and being replaced by one that will be much friendlier to Republicans and business-oriented Democrats.

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Why, then, despite so much good news, are Republicans having such difficulty finding their footing? Leaving aside the general problem of keeping a majority together in a system in which constituency interests are so well organized, several points are worth noting:

First, Republicans in Congress have tried to govern without also controlling the presidency, an impossible task. Democrats, during the decades they controlled the Congress, never tried to govern the country while Republicans held the White House. They sought instead to undermine or neutralize Republican presidents, while waiting for a fellow Democrat to capture the presidency before aggressively moving their agenda forward. Republicans will probably have to do the same.

Second, Bill Clinton has been especially adept at co-opting Republican proposals where they could not be resisted (as with welfare reform and the balanced budget) and in attacking those proposals where they have not been especially popular (as with Medicare reform). Clinton is somewhat unusual when compared with other contemporary Democratic leaders, most of whom since the 1960s have been less interested in building majorities than in giving expression to the pain-stricken liberal conscience. Clinton, by contrast, seems unfazed by the kind of claims that paralyzed the likes of George McGovern, Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, and Michael Dukakis. Since no one has seen a Democrat like this in a generation, Republicans have had some difficulty figuring out how to deal with him.

Third, it is much easier to build a subsidy state (as the Democrats did) than to take one apart (as the Republicans are trying to do), because in the first case it appears that you are giving people something, while in the second it seems that you are taking it away. Since the news media collaborate with the Democrats in sustaining this deception, Republicans who seek to eliminate this or that program are made to look gratuitously mean or cheap. It is not surprising then when some Republicans, especially those within the circulation range of a major liberal newspaper, begin to back off from efforts to end or scale back federal programs. The Republican majority is so thin that just a few such defections are sufficient to disrupt it.

Finally, a conservative program is not especially well tailored to stimulate the kind of drama and expectation that liberals were able to excite when they came to power in the 1930s and the 1960s. They promised a social revolution and an end to inequality, poverty, and war, all to be achieved through government programs that the liberals themselves would run. The inevitable failure of liberalism has given conservatives their opportunity, but their revolution is a much more sober affair, based as it is on themes of individual choice, free markets, and limits on government. A conservative program, in contrast to a liberal one, diminishes expectations from government and deflects energies away from politics in order to encourage the pursuit of private aspirations. To the extent it is successful, then, a conservative program deflects attention and credit away from itself and into these other areas, and stimulates a healthy skepticism toward government and politicians. Unfortunately, some of this skepticism seems to rub off on conservatives too, thus undermining support both for themselves and their initiatives. Tony Blair has exploited such a vacuum in England, and Clinton has done so as well here.

It is not surprising that some of the conservative self-confidence of the Reagan years has worn off, since many of the major battles of those years have been won. The enthusiasm generated by the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994 has dissipated rather quickly, for reasons noted above, but a good test of any movement is whether it can institutionalize itself to the point where steady progress can be made after such initial enthusiasm has faded.

James Piereson is executive director of the John M. Olin Foundation.

Daniel Pipes

A possible explanation: Imagine you live in New York City and you've been convinced that 50 years of rent control does grievous economic harm to the city and is an iniquitous system. But you also have the good fortune of living in a rent-controlled apartment and are paying much below market price for it. In this case, your abstract beliefs would conflict with your specific circumstances. In the tradition of St. Augustine, you'd want the conservative agenda to proceed, but not yet.

Many find themselves in the same bind. You agree that the existing welfare system is a disaster but blanch at the prospect of the poor in your own city getting cut off. You recognize that Social Security can't go on this way but worry about your parents' benefits. Similar fears apply to myriad other programs—mort-

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gage deductibility, minimum-wage laws, the arts and humanities endowments, Medicare, aid to cities. In other words, the nanny state coopts all but the most determined conservatives.

To do battle against this colossus, politicians must take heed that the status quo has great power, then factor this into their calculations. That means going more slowly than they would wish, applying constant pressure, and acting with great cleverness and a certain stealthiness. It won't be easy. But then, it took 30 years, from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson, to construct the liberal state. Pulling it down will likely not go faster.

Daniel Pipes is editor of the **Middle East Quarterly** *and author of* **The Rushdie Affair: The Novel, the Ayatollah, and the West.**

Irwin M. Stelzer

After so many years of being good losers, conservatives have forgotten how to be good winners. To whine about the "peculiar state" of conservatives is to forget the healthy state of conservatism. A Democratic president has signed a welfare-reform bill and is reduced to arguing over just who will receive how much in tax cuts. A Labour prime minister in Britain has promised to crack down on teenage miscreants and to privatize the student-loan program, after reducing corporate taxes. As for France, if the voters there think their new government can keep its promises to cut taxes and hire hundreds of thousands of new civil servants, while still meeting the criteria for monetary union, *c'est la vie*. Sooner or later the French will be mugged by reality and left with the choice of following the conservative path now being trodden by their left-in-name-only American and British counterparts, or of giving a Gallic shrug and watching unemployment reach 15 percent.

Conservative gloom seems to arise from two sources. First, allegedly conservative candidates have developed the unhappy habit of losing elections. To say that Bob Dole was neither a conservative nor a credible candidate, that Alain Juppé was asking the French to suffer so that they could have the privilege of ceding control of monetary policy to their friendly German neighbors, and that Britain's Tories had been in power so long that they became a bickering, sleazy crew incapable of governing, is to provide only a partial explanation.

More important are two facts. Conservative victories contain the seeds of subsequent defeats; and American conservatives, at least, have decided that it is more fun to destroy one another than to do battle with enemies on their ideological left.

Conservative victories involve increasing the perceived risk with which voters must live. Individual responsibility for medical care is scarier than government provision; individual responsibility for pension provision is scarier still; assured, union-backed lifetime employment with a single firm seems less risky than lifetime employment at several firms, a risk increase that for many is not offset by higher lifetime wages; open competition with overseas workers is unsettling and is not always seen as the necessary corollary to cheap imported sneakers and automobiles.

After a rapid period of market openings, and of associated corporate adjustment to globalization and deregulation, voters find conservatives' talk of further increases in risk disturbing. It is not surprising that a siren song that includes verses about compulsory insurance for kids, more regulation of polluters, and similar expressions of "caring," sung by a president capable of projecting real compassion, should receive a standing ovation from voters. Especially when the cast of the competing show down the street is appallingly unattractive.

In the longer run, conservatives have nothing to

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fear but conservatives themselves. They have shifted the center of political gravity so far to the right that most of their goals are more or less being realized. As the benefits of the reforms they have pressed become obvious—especially if welfare reform proves a success—their candidates will begin to find as much favor as their programs. Unless the bickering continues.

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"Bickering" may trivialize the issue, for this civil war among conservatives is not a conflict of personalities, but of deeply held ideas about the relationship of the individual to the state. In this corner we have the social conservatives, who seem to want to get government out of the boardroom so that it will have more time to interfere in the bedroom, not to mention the living rooms and dens in which people watch television. In the opposite corner we have the small-government crowd, a group that not only wants to prevent the government from telling businessmen how to run their businesses but, equally, to prevent it from telling responsible citizens how to run their lives. In specific policy terms we have the social engineering that underlies the child tax credit vs. the desire for a neutral tax system that results in calls for lower tax rates on all marginal incomes.

For a time, the pressure of the Cold War united these factions more than their differing views on the role of government divided them. No longer. So they must learn to cohabit without an external enemy to unite them—which they are unlikely to do—or find a new common enemy. The good news is that such an enemy is about to make himself available. Whether the Democrats choose Al Gore or Dick Gephardt, they will have picked a candidate who antagonizes economic conservatives by favoring bigger government, and whose notions of the role of what the editors call "traditional morality" will be anathema to social conservatives. A common enemy at last, one less capable of being all things to all men than Bill Clinton.

Now, all American and British conservatives need is a candidate. Why they seem to end up with the Bob Doles and William Hagues is a mystery I hope others can answer.

Irwin M. Stelzer is director of regulatory-policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr.

Let us leave conservatism as it is found in Britain and France out of these proceedings. Both conservatisms embrace too many indigenous quirks, among them libidinous riot in Britain and the Frenchman's dispendious urge to transform all France into one vast Louvre covered with dust—dust, the glory of a France untouched by free markets. It is the dust that makes France France and the tortured libido that makes the British Tory a swinging Yuppie.

As for the condition of conservatism in these United States just one decade posterior to Ronald Reagan, the political maestro who revived the Republic armed with the ideas of Milton Friedman and enlivened by the verve of *National Review* and its youthful allies in the conservative counterculture: Compare him with his political descendants. Was George Bush or Bob Dole his rightful heir? Was Newt Gingrich or Trent Lott the direct descendant of the Old Cowboy? Out in the states, is there a governor's mansion occupied by his like? For that matter, are the universities abounding with Friedmans or any of the tough-minded foreign-policy strategists who gave Reagan his edge in ending the Cold War? As to the verve of *National Review* and the conservative counterculture, more later.

The facts are difficult to deny: Ours is an age of second-rate minds and second-rate characters. Once again Carlyle's observation deserves a round of bravos. The history of the world is indeed the biography of

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great men, walking, of course, over the debris of nitwits and scoundrels. And, by the way, the liberal politicos and intellectuals are merely third-rate minds and third-rate characters. So discredited is their ideology that they dare not even identify with it. Instead they play masked politics, denying their fundamental liberal statism while donning the masks of the environmentalists, the feminists, the fat people's liberation army, or whatever other sham they might hide behind to disguise their unchanging instinctive resort to expansive state power.

The conservatives' peculiar problem is today about the same as it was when I wrote my 1992 assessment of their condition, *The Conservative Crack-Up*. Conservatives have been marginalized. They have been marginalized by a dreary, philistine culture, posing as high culture and utterly polluted by the smog of so-called liberal politics. American political and intellectual culture is wasting away in a *Kultursmog*. The *Kultursmog* even infects the conservatives. It disfigures their achievements.

Thus the healthy economy that Reagan developed has been falsely depicted as an economy debauched in debt. It magnifies their shortcomings. Thus the liberal who secretly fears a diminution in government publicly chides the Reagan era for failing to cut government back. In the *Kultursmog* it is popular to doubt Reagan's will to do so. Though liberalism itself is riven by discord and abandoned by its most artful prestidigitator, Bill Clinton, the *Kultursmog* features only news stories about the divisions on the right, for instance Gingrich's problems with the House of Representatives' class of 1994, David Brock's quarrels with his conservative critics.

Having been marginalized, the conservatives grow peevish and self-absorbed. With the *Kultursmog* pressing in on all sides, broadcast into their living rooms, wafting through their classrooms, in art museums, the corner health-food shop, all over the land save at such redoubts of freedom as a NASCAR race, some conservatives grow fearful of tax cuts, grieve the death of Allen Ginsberg, hope for a pat on the head from some wretched editor of the *New York Times*. Many in Congress have actually come to fear a critical editorial from the smokestacks of the *Kultursmog* and hope for a bouquet of wilted roses from some *Kulturallysmogged* institution—Bob Dole would accept an accolade from the NAACP if it were offered or from the Ben and Jerry's ice-cream makers, say, his own flavor, Dolorous Pineapple Sorbet.

The only way to explain the collapse in the congressional leadership is that it has not been able to resist the *smog* that presses in on all sides. Its problem is that it never was very deeply rooted in the ideas that sustained Ronald Reagan. But there is another equally important problem. By the 1990s the forces of Goldwater conservatism and of those honorable liberals who became neoconservatives had created a true deodorant to the *Kultursmog*, an intelligent conservative counterculture. Following the lead of *National Review* in the 1950s and 1960s, the conservatives came up with a string of fine magazines, intellectually lively think tanks, a superb newspaper, the *Washington Times*, and authors who wrote literary and scholarly books of the first rank—well, in historic terms, the second rank.

Yet the conservative politicians took little interest. After all they were modern politicians. Rather than run on principle, they ran in pursuit of approval. With such weak character they naturally were susceptible to the *Kultursmog*. Oh for a good word from one smokestack in Manhattan!

What is the solution? In history there is no solution, and this is a struggle for history. But there are some things that can be done or can continue to be done. Conservatives must maintain the institutions of their counterculture. They must rely on the highest intellectual standards. Encourage debate and stick by principle. They must look to their best minds and recycle their best ideas. At this they are not so good. They have difficulty paying much attention to one another. It is one of the effects of being marginalized. In fact, they do not even pay much attention to the giants of their past. Do you know that July 9 was the 200th anniversary of the death of Edmund Burke? In Britain two books were published to solemnize the occasion. How many American conservative institutions or journalists paused to let out a yell?

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Paul M. Weyrich

There is in fact no contradiction between the ascendancy of conservative ideas and the defeat of so-called conservative parties. The reality is that these parties do not represent conservatives at all. The Republican party in the United States, the Progressive Conservatives in Canada, the Gaullists in France, the

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post-Thatcher Conservative party in Great Britain, and the Christian Democrats in Italy, all of which have suffered recent defeats, represent the Establishment, not conservatives.

In Europe, the dividing issue between Establishment and true conservatives is national sovereignty. Conservatives want to maintain it; the Establishment wants to surrender it to bureaucrats in Brussels. In every case, the "conservative" party that lost was on the side of the Eurocrats. In France, the victorious Socialists expressed more doubts about European union than did the Gaullists, and probably picked up some conservative votes. The one French party that clearly stood for national sovereignty, the National Front of the discredited Jean-Marie Le Pen, did very well; in the first round of voting, it came within less than a percentage point of displacing the Gaullists as the main conservative party. Le Pen unfortunately has been the only party leader to speak out on the greatest cultural issue facing France (and Europe): the Islamic threat. It is most disturbing, but one can argue that the National Front is now the French conservative party, and despite massive opposition from the entire French Establishment, in each election it gains strength. It prospers because the Gaullists have failed to keep their promises.

In Britain, the Conservative party under John Major sold out the British political tradition for a handful of Euros and paid the price. The German situation may provide a like case: Helmut Kohl's CDU is wildly pro-Europe, while polls show most Germans want marks, not Euros, in their pay packets.

In North America, Canada is ahead of the United States in dumping Establishment conservatives for real conservatives. The Progressive Conservatives were almost wiped out in the previous election by the populist, anti-government, pro-majority-culture Reform party; in Canada's recent election, the Progressive Conservatives managed only a small, regional comeback, while the Reform party became the official opposition.

In 1996, Bob Dole told cultural conservatives to take a hike, and they did. The result was the first Democrat to win a second term since FDR. The Establishment Republican party held onto Congress, but its leadership, which seems to have learned nothing from Dole's defeat, often sells out conservatives, sometimes even with enthusiasm. An American equivalent of Canada's Reform party could under these circumstances find widespread grass-roots support.

In Europe and North America, the basic story is the same: Real conservatives are a populist, anti-Establishment force that is not represented by Establishment "conservative" parties. When anti-Establishment conservative parties emerge, they do well, often displacing the older party. Until that dynamic has run its course, conservative power at the polls will be latent or divided, giving victories to the Left. But the Establishment conservative parties will eventually fall victim to their own internal contradictions, and once that happens, there is a good probability of solid, repeated conservative victories in all the Western countries.

Paul M. Weyrich is president of National Empowerment Television.

James Q. Wilson

The victories of Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and Lionel Jospin, taken as a whole, signal a moderate advance in conservative thought, not a retreat. Clinton was reelected because the American economy was in good condition; Jospin was elected because the French economy was a mess; Blair was elected because the British economy, now on the rebound, had been in the doldrums for many years.

One of the few solid things political scientists know about elections is that the pocketbook issue is no slogan. Good times means incumbents win, bad times means they lose, regardless of their political labels. At times—Margaret Thatcher comes to mind—conservative incumbents can even win when the economy is struggling, but there are not many Thatchers about (and today, even fewer of her old, hard-line socialist opponents).

A real defeat for conservative thought would have been this: Clinton's being reelected on good economic news even though he remained an unreconstructed left-liberal, and Blair's defeating Major despite having maintained the hegemony of political radicals in the Labour party.

Jospin's victory in France was a setback for conservatism, but probably a happy one. If he carries out his plan of shortening the work week while leaving intact all employee subsidies, he will drive the French economy further into the ground. The next time, perhaps French conservatives will do what Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan did—reduce protectionism, cut employee subsidies, and deregulate businesses. But

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since the French are, alas, French, it is probably too much to hope that economic rationality will penetrate any government there.

Whatever one may think of Blair and Clinton, the changes each achieved in his party's orientation were striking. Since American parties are weaker than British ones, the Clinton change was more personal than organizational. By moving—at first slowly and reluctantly, then more rapidly and decisively—to endorse a balanced budget, some tax cuts, and an apparently tough line on crime, Clinton faced down the traditional Left in his party. He did it so successfully that he lacked a primary opponent in 1996.

Blair's transformation of the Labour party was a vastly more significant accomplishment. By some combination of personal skill, rhetorical ambiguity, and party maneuvers, he removed every element of Neil Kinnock from the Labour movement, converting it into something familiar to young, college-educated professionals—a party that is moderate on economic issues and liberal on social ones. What was once a stridently socialist party is now a vaguely do-good one.

The old Left in both countries agrees with Clinton and Blair on social issues but remains resolved to use government to reduce economic inequality. It is this latter commitment that both leaders have more or less rejected. Since Clinton cannot manage the internal affairs of his party, he remains open to the demands of Richard Gephardt and his allies for protectionism, high taxes, and domestic-spending increases, whatever their effect on fiscal policy. The American Left continues to denounce tax cuts as biased toward "the rich" and spending cuts as occurring on the backs of "the poor."

But these leftist demands must confront the transformation of the American worker into someone with a large, vested pension benefit, heavy participation in his employer's stock-option plan, and a deep distrust of what he takes to be the moral decay of our society. In that world, old-Left slogans tend to sound especially hollow. They are not even especially vulnerable to free trade. The "giant sucking sound" we heard after the ratification of NAFTA was popular support for Ross Perot being cut in half.

All of this can change if the economy turns sour. But so far it is remarkably strong because here (and in Britain) far-sighted political leaders prevented the emergence of any equivalent to the Franco-German system of worker protectionism that has deeply hurt industrial competitiveness.

If the economy remains strong, most people will feel little affinity for economic redistribution. In that case, conservative policies will have to adapt to a far greater challenge than they have so far faced. In the past, the chief task was to free up economic enterprise so that people would become better off. This meant fighting regulations that set prices or reduced competition and keeping tax rates reasonably low. These struggles were fought out in legislatures and before public opinion.

Today the problem is much different. It is to wage a difficult battle in the trenches of bureaucratic life to do things that are hard to advertise and do not make attractive slogans. They include ending racial and ethnic preferences, maintaining a strong military force, finding ways of curbing illegitimate births, converting environmentalism into something that really protects the environment instead of simply expanding the EPA's regulatory powers, and forcing the political system to deal effectively with a bankrupt Medicare system and a soon-to-be-bankrupt Social Security system.

Conservatives worldwide are in a peculiar state. On the one hand, their ideas seem to be ascendant; on the other hand, the parties and politicians that represent them seem to be getting battered. Clinton, Blair, and Jospin are victorious, while politicians allied with what we think of as "conservative" ideas about the free market, regulation, the size of government, and traditional morality are reeling from defeat after defeat. In the United States, the Republican Congress has lost its moorings in the wake of Bill Clinton's reelection. What's going on? What does it mean? What happened to the confident conservatism of Thatcher, Reagan, and the 1994 Republican congressional victory?

These challenges work against, not in favor, of much popular sentiment. Conservatives cannot argue in favor of blocking undesirable new legislation or depriving privileged businesses of economic subsidies. They must instead find a way to take away from many people what they now, wrongly, want to keep. So far, most Republicans have had little to say on any of these matters. That is their gravest problem.

James Q. Wilson is professor of management and public policy at UCLA and the author, most recently, of **Moral Judgment** *(BasicBooks).*

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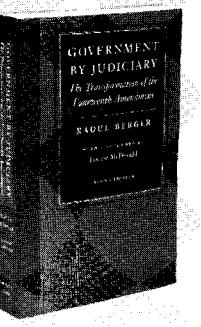

It is the thesis of this monumentally argued book that the United States Supreme Court—largely through abuses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution—has embarked on "a continuing revision of the Constitution, under the guise of interpretation." Consequently, the Court has subverted America's democratic institutions and wreaked havoc upon Americans' social and political lives.

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Raoul Berger, now 96, retired in 1976 as Charles Warren Senior Fellow in American Legal History at Harvard University.

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A Fan's Biography

A Portrait of Frederick Exley, Great American Loser

By Christopher Caldwell

"A man named Exley wrote to say that he liked the stories," John Cheever told a friend in 1966. "I thanked him briefly. He then called collect from Miami and asked me to post five hundred dollars bail. He had just smashed up a saloon and knew I would understand."

At the time he wrote Cheever, Frederick Exley was an unemployed 37-year-old living on his mother's couch in far upstate New York. He had spent much of his adult life in bars and much of it drifting around the country, drinking his way out of one job after another, and had put in two lengthy stints in mental hospitals, where he was diagnosed variously as an alcoholic, a depressive, and a schizophrenic. Exley himself was not very sanguine about "that long malaise, my life," but his diagnosis differed. He saw himself as a not-atypical American whose country had no use for his talents, such as they were—and he had ruminated on that problem with considerable subtlety and brilliance. In 1968, he published a "fictional memoir" called *A Fan's Notes* that was unlike any book that American literature had yet seen.

It was never a big seller, and it did not put an end to Exley's decades of failure. When IRS agents raided his apartment in 1987 to look for "undisclosed wealth," they found enough to assess Exley taxes of three dollars and nine cents—this for a man who never paid back the thousands he had cadged, a tenner at a time, from virtually all of his friends. In (premature) old age, Exley would hit a kind of dissolute's superfecta: By the time he died of a series of strokes in 1992, at 63, he was suffering from incipient cirrhosis, angina so bad that he was on permanent nitroglycerin infusions, and (by his own account) lung cancer. More disappointingly for him, his two later books, *Pages from a Cold Island* (1975) and *Last Notes from Home* (1988), were critical and commercial flops. Nonetheless, there remains *A Fan's Notes*. It has just been reissued in a prestigious Modern Library edition, and those who hailed it early on as a masterpiece—among them Cheever, William Styron, Robert Penn Warren, Geoffrey Wolff, and *Washington Post* book critic Jonathan Yardley—look more and more correct.

Chas Fagan

Hence Yardley's *Misfit*, the first "biography" of Exley. Biography in quotes because, by Yardley's own admission, this is a strangely intimate work, one that refers to its subject throughout as "Fred," and to certain aspects of Exley's personality as "Fredness." Although Yardley and Exley never met face to face, the novelist was apt, when drunk, to resort to the phone in the wee hours, sometimes running up phone bills of $900 a month or more. And Yardley, who had championed *A Fan's Notes* upon first reading it as a Nieman fellow at Harvard in 1969, was one of Exley's favorite late-night interlocutors.

There are other reasons for such intimacy. Exley is perhaps the least "documented" major writer of modern times. Records of his life appear only in a handful of memoirs and letters and the occasional hospital-discharge report. His companions were mostly a few widely scattered barflies. His life is thus not amenable to the usual biographer's methods of archival rounds and interviews with New York literati. Yardley considers it "pointless" to follow this method with Exley. "After wasting a fair amount of time trying to pinpoint Fred's exact whereabouts at certain periods of his life," Yardley writes, "I concluded that this was utterly irrelevant to the central purposes of this book." Yardley's purpose

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is to come to grips with the themes of *A Fan's Notes*. That *Misfit* reads Exley's life largely through the raw material of just one of his novels is both its great strength and its great weakness.

To understand the territory *Misfit* will cover, one need understand only the territory of *A Fan's Notes*. Exley's novel begins in a bar in his hometown of Watertown, New York, on a Sunday afternoon in the early sixties. The protagonist—"Frederick Exley"—is watching the New York (football) Giants, a team he follows with an obsessive devotion, when he suffers an alcoholic seizure that he mistakes for a heart attack. In the seven chapters that follow he flashes back and then forward to pivotal episodes in his earlier life: his relationship with his father (a small-time football hero), his college years at USC, his stint in a madhouse, his years as a promising young PR man, his abortive first marriage, and a range of booze-induced catastrophes that beset him across the 1950s and 1960s, from fallings-out with old friends to divorce to nights in jail to sexual frustration to the inability to make ends meet. For all the disorientation of the book's main character, there is nothing disoriented about the way he relates his adventures,

Jonathan Yardley
Misfit
The Strange Life of Frederick Exley
Knopf, 255 pp., $23

Frederick Exley
A Fan's Notes
Modern Library, 425 pp., $16.50

which are picturesque, direct, and often desperately funny. Yardley is right to see Exley as a throwback, "at heart an old-fashioned writer who worshipped at the shrines of story, character development and sense of place."

A Fan's Notes is a welcoming book that reads like a diary. Not *The Diary of a Madman*, or even *The Diary of a Nobody*, but something far more American: the Diary of a Loser. "America had gone wrong for me, or me for America," Exley writes. "I had held up my hand, said, '*Whoah* there: this has gone far enough!' and had gone home to Mummy." Exley is well aware of the part self-pity has played in making him a loser. He's well aware, too, that during his brief stint in the corporate world, the perquisites of American prosperity—raises, three-hour lunches, and the girls who will sleep with those who get them—were handed to him on a plate. Yet Exley can find no avenue into what he admits are the boundless opportunities for wealth and happiness in America, for he cannot in good conscience inhabit the American mainstream.

So far, it sounds like the premise of countless bad novels. But Exley's complaint is not the usual one about conformity and exploitation. It is that mainstream America offers no scope for heroism or manliness. In this he resembles that other great laureate of boozy loserdom, the poet John Berryman, who lamented, "A man can lead his whole life in this country at present without ever discovering whether he is a courageous man or not."

Exley's paltry job experience was largely in advertising and public relations, and he may be the only novelist who brings to his craft the passion of an ad exec *manqué*. "I knew something of America's vulgar yearnings," he writes. "Whose were more vulgar than mine?" It is Exley's argument that striving for success is bound to disappoint the striver, and his attack on the Horatio Alger myth surely explains the book's popularity with the countercultural literati of the 1960s and '70s. But such popularity was the result of a gigantic misunderstanding, for Exley's faith in Heroism, Success, and transcendence through Making It is boundless and unequivocal. Where he parts ways

The author of *Radical Son* explains

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"I still believe in the liberation of blacks, minorities, and the poor, as I did in the 1960s. Only now I believe they must be liberated from the chains of liberalism and the welfare state—from permanent dependence on government handouts, from perverse incentives to bear children out of wedlock, from an inverted ethics that implies it is better to receive than to give, and worse—to receive without reciprocity or responsibility; and above all without work."*

*Why I'm Not A Liberal

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with the American Dream is over the cheapness of it, the democratic baloney that "anyone can be a hero" disseminated by political panderers and the mass media.

Exley admires the athlete, the soldier, the imperialist, the mysterious plutocrat, the literary genius, the man with dash. Hence his repair to football as the antidote to a world of otherwise invincible malarkey, and his adulation of New York Giants running back Frank Gifford, who attended USC at the same time as Exley. For Exley, football is

> an island of directness in a world of circumspection. In football a man was asked to do a difficult and brutal job, and he either did it or got out. There was nothing rhetorical or vague about it; I chose to believe that it was not unlike the jobs which all men, in some sunnier past, had been called upon to do. It smacked of something old, something traditional, something unclouded by legerdemain and subterfuge.

Unfortunately, even the highest, most uneuphemizable heroism has been enlisted in the national quest to sell deodorant. The hero's *heroism* is crowded out by the hero's *fame*—and the greater the performer, the more he is cheapened by it. The product-buying American public colludes in this cheapening because it allows them to dismiss Gifford's on-field heroics as mere *popularity*, rather than the deeds of a truly superior man, a man apart. That's why Exley is troubled, during his stay in the asylum, by a magazine ad featuring Gifford:

> A tartan cap tilted rakishly to one side of his head, a football tucked under his arm, a how-the-hell-did-I-get-here? expression on his face (exactly the kind of thing I might once have imagined for myself), he was showing the reader how splendidly handsome and virile he might look were he to wear a V-necked Jantzen pullover. That sweater . . . seemed to make my state-issue cotton plaid shirt burn hot on my flesh, the hot humiliation of having hoped for too much.

Exley thinks of America, atomized by television, mobility, and consumerism, as a very lonely place. He fears that, in such a society, the celebrity-fan relationship replaces the friend-friend or the relative-relative link as the most important. It is a complicated relationship to have with a personality one knows only through the television. But it is a desperately important one, and there is a crazy integrity to it. Being a fan means recognizing that it is better and more honest to honor such genuine heroism as Gifford's than to lower one's standards to fit the corporate propaganda in which heroism is parodied. In other words, he is defending a cult of heroism against a cult of celebrity.

Yardley is a sensitive reader of Exley, and yet for all his disparaging of "laundry list biography," more biographical spadework is in order. To be sure, there's important new information here: that Gifford became a big fan of Exley's writing, threw the book party for *Last Notes from Home*, and loaded Exley with tickets to big football games; that the novelist was able to attend college thanks only to a large legal settlement he received from a disruptive and near-deadly car accident he was

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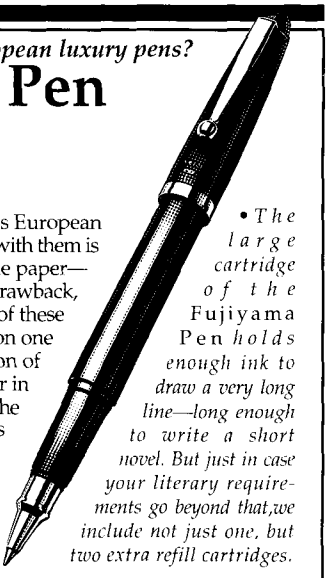

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involved in as a high-school student; that Exley never spoke of that car accident as long as he lived. The most important revelation is Yardley's discovery, based on "fragmentary evidence," that *A Fan's Notes* would have been published as nonfiction if not for legal concerns.

Still, Exley's readers will be disappointed at the shoes that don't drop. We learn what Exley drank (vodka and grapefruit juice) but not what he smoked (Old Golds). We learn of his adult literary interests (Bellow, Fitzgerald, Nabokov) but not of his youthful reading habits. Who is the "stunning" female companion "who turned people's heads" on Exley's last trip to London? Did Exley ever attempt suicide, as he claimed in an episode of *Pages from a Cold Island* that Yardley leaves unmentioned? In place of such detail, Yardley merely accompanies a close reading of *A Fan's Notes* with lots of speculation—on Exley's sexual "identity," for instance, which he ruminates on for a half-dozen pages before dropping it as a fruitless line of inquiry—so that the book reads at times less like a biography of Exley than like a plot summary of his major work, accompanied by a study guide.

Yardley has a solid line of defense in his claim that Exley ultimately had only one book in him. The same is true, Yardley notes, of Ralph Ellison, that other tribune of a twisted and secretive American obsession. Ellison's status as a chronicler of a black man's invisibility was imperiled the minute he became a highly visible man of letters. Exley was caught in just as knotty a trap once he became a winner by chronicling his life as a loser. For how majestic can fame be if a grog-addled no-account off the funny farm could obtain a measure of it? Noting Exley's tendency to ape Hemingway's mannerisms later in his life and to go to extremes of self-promotion, Yardley writes: "Fred was caught in the trap of fame, or what passes for fame within a literary culture that is itself a pitifully small part of the larger American culture."

Exley, in fact, was caught in the "trap of fame" before anybody had ever heard of him. His point is that we're all caught in it—the famous and the non-famous alike. ♦

McCormick Revisited

A Remarkable, Underappreciated Newsman

By Fred Barnes

The *Chicago Tribune* is embarrassed by the man who made it a great newspaper. On the 150th anniversary of the paper last June, associate managing editor F. Richard Ciccone told his readers that Colonel Robert McCormick inappropriately imposed his likes and dislikes—especially his dislikes—on the paper's coverage. McCormick's opposition to internationalists, interventionists, liberals, the League of Nations, FDR, Herbert Hoover, Tom Dewey, John Foster Dulles, England, Russia, Henry Ford, New York City, the South, Communists, socialists, activists, Prohibitionists, and racists (this is only a partial list) spilled over into the paper's news columns. Worse yet, the *Tribune* kept at it, violating what Ciccone called "the commonly accepted requirement of objectivity on its front pages," when other papers began to clean up their acts in the 1950s and 1960s. Now, Ciccone concluded triumphantly, the paper is legit, providing the "usual coverage of politics that is found everywhere else in America."

Richard Norton Smith
The Colonel
The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick
Houghton Mifflin, 597 pp., $35

Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard.

True enough. The *Tribune* today is like most major newspapers, indeed like most of American journalism. It's trendy, professional, self-important, politically correct, faintly liberal, elitist, and extremely bland. It has a few great reporters (Bill Neikirk, Jim Warren, Ciccone himself), but no distinctive edge. It's not fun to read, or interesting, or infuriating. What the *Tribune* needs is exactly what it's happy to be rid of—an idiosyncratic guiding force like McCormick.

McCormick, who died in 1955 after running the paper for nearly a half-century, was neither fair nor objective. A rich kid who grew up unloved, he used the *Tribune* to promote the Republican party and his own predilections. He thought the nation's capital should be moved out of Washington, perhaps to Grand Rapids, Michigan. He assigned reporters to find out whether University of Wisconsin men wore lace underwear and why New Yorkers spat on the sidewalk. But McCormick was also a newspaperman who insisted on hiring the best reporters, providing serious coverage not only of Chicago but of the entire world, running the best features and comics, and taking on the powerful (even powerful Republicans). "For all his strangeness, he really did have an integrity and professionalism all his own," *Washington Post* publisher Katherine Graham told biographer Richard Norton Smith.

In *The Colonel: The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick*, Smith

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captures the mad-genius quality that drove McCormick and made the *Tribune* a rousing commercial success, though it never became the "the world's greatest newspaper" he claimed it was. McCormick was a peculiar fellow. He insisted the room temperature at his home or office be 60 degrees. "He frowned on off-color stories, women who wore rouge, and anyone who lit up in defiance of the NO SMOKING signs he had posted throughout Tribune Tower," Smith writes. "A prudish streak prompted orders to the art department to paint more clothes on an offending model and to conceal her feet." McCormick believed feet were ugly. He also didn't like the sound of whistling or the cooing of mourning doves, which he shot from his bedroom window.

In some ways, McCormick was a fraud. He had a moralistic streak, yet "required the ego gratification that came from stealing another man's wife." But he was a genuine colonel, having served with notable bravery in France during World War I with the First Division. He was a far-seeing businessman, trekking repeatedly to Canada to create his own logging community and ensure a steady supply of newsprint. And he spearheaded (and financed) the successful challenge of a prior-restraint order barring publication of supposedly offensive material that led to the landmark *Near* v. *Minnesota* decision of the Supreme Court in 1931.

Smith, the director of the Gerald Ford Museum in Grand Rapids and author of an acclaimed biography of Tom Dewey, breaks new ground with revelations about President Franklin Roosevelt's efforts to drive McCormick out of business. FDR personally got Marshall Field III to launch the *Chicago Sun* to compete with the *Tribune*. When the *Tribune* printed classified details about the Japanese fleet in 1942, FDR initially wanted to send Marines to occupy the Tribune Tower and indict McCormick for treason. Later, FDR overrode the objections of his attorney general and had a grand jury convened to investigate McCormick, who was not indicted. Meanwhile, Interior secretary Harold Ickes proposed intervening with Canadian officials to block McCormick's access to newsprint. Once again, we discover that White House trampling of the Constitution didn't start with Watergate.

In lamenting the *Tribune*'s past, Ciccone complained the paper "was still wearing its conservative trappings" well past McCormick's death. It continued to run a daily cartoon on page one, most of them bashing Democrats. Since the 1970s, though, all that has vanished. Media critics applauded. I doubt that many readers did. ♦

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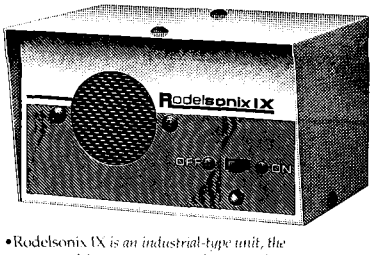

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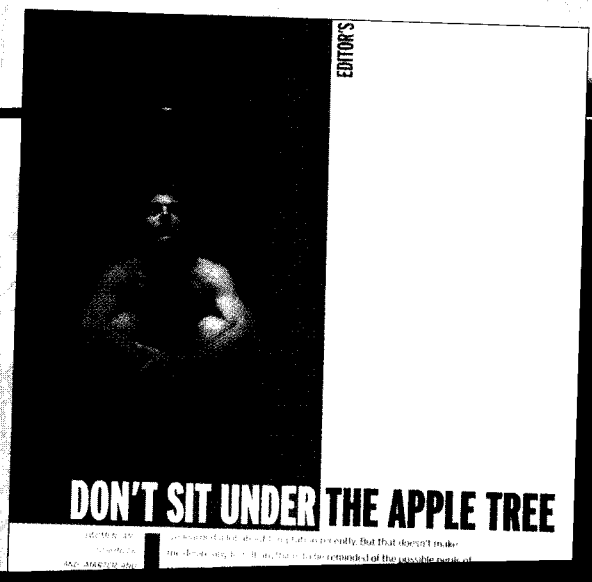

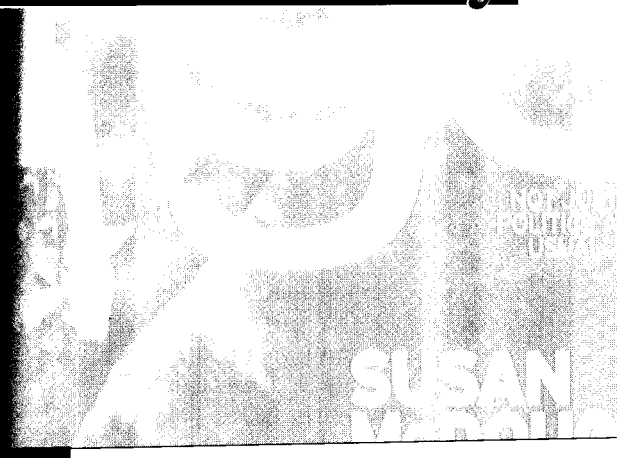

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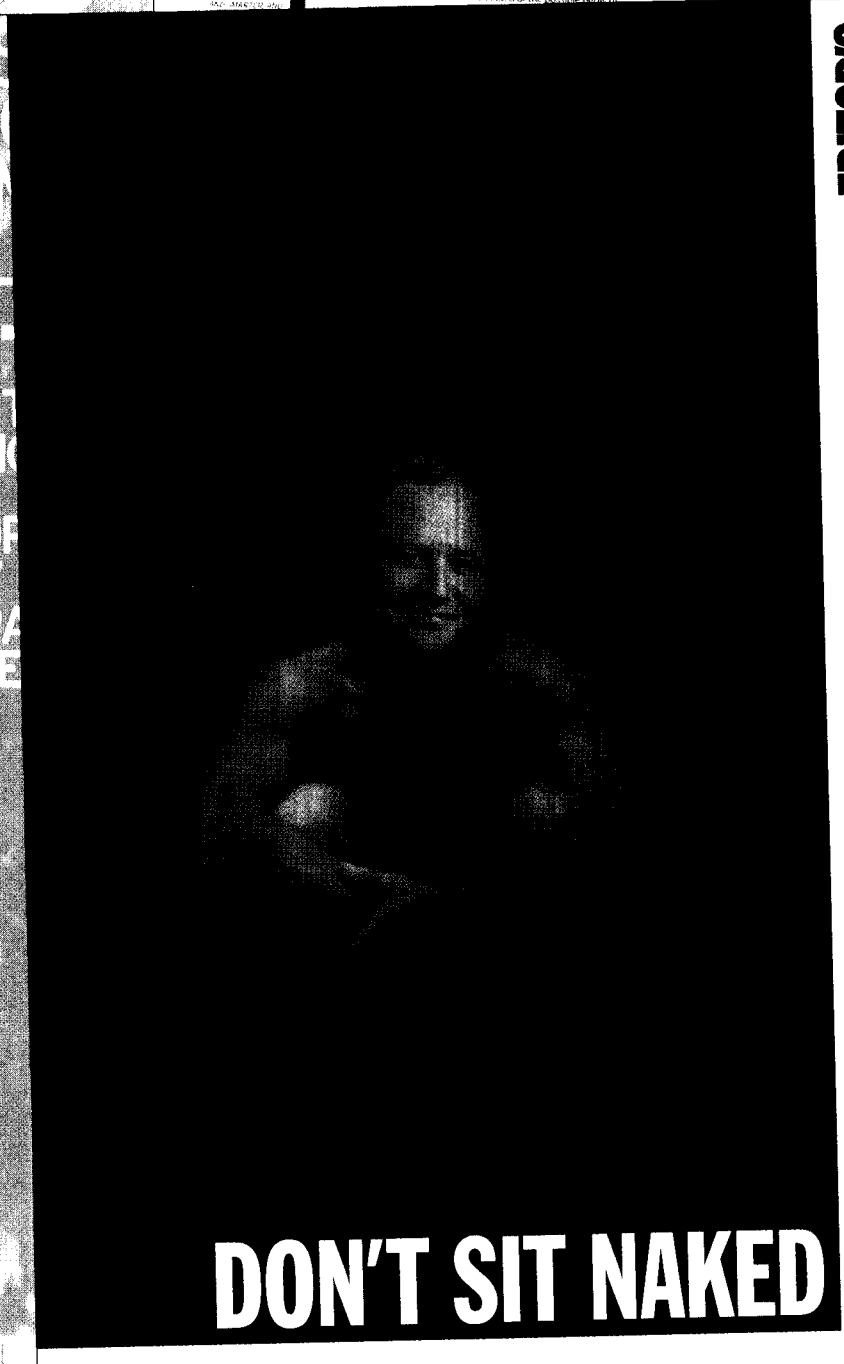

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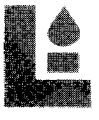

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